

**Community Food Initiatives: A comparative study of
approaches addressing the link between poor diet and
low income in Scotland and Canada**

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**PhD
The University of Edinburgh
2004**

Declaration

This thesis has been composed by myself, Yanina Dutton, and the work, of which it is a record, has been carried out by myself. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. All sources of information have been specifically acknowledged by means of a reference.

Signed:

Date:

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank all the people who have helped me in my journey over the course of the thesis. Firstly, to the projects, without them the research would not have been possible. These include FoodShare, Field To Table, in particular Mary Lou Morgan, Debbie Field, Lee Hannah and the Edinburgh Community Food Initiative, in particular John Brennan. Thanks to the volunteers at both projects that worked with me and helped me to carry out the fieldwork and of course, to the respondents for the time, commitment and enthusiasm shown to me.

I would like to thank my mum for inspiring me on the subject matter. Her unusual tastes in food and interest in healthy eating gave me the impetus to carry out research in this area. I would also like to thank the support team who have helped proof read along the way, Fiona, Mum, Wendy, Tom and Gerri. A special thanks to Shane for his patience, encouragement and never ending support. Also thanks to family and friends in the UK and Canada, in particular Sally, Marsha, Euan, Danny, Cameron, Sian, Sarah, Zoë and the rest of the postgraduates. Their support carried me through this. Although at times it has been arduous, overall it has been an experience and along the way, I've made many new friendships.

This work has been carried out under the supervision of Dr. Alex Robertson and Prof. Steve Platt. I thank them for their help, co-operation and continual helpful feedback over the course of the research and the write-up.

Finally, thanks to the ESRC for funding me over the first three years and to NIACE, especially Jan, Peter and Veronica for supporting me and allowing time to complete the thesis.

Abstract

Ill-health associated with poor diet has underlined the importance of food consumption as a central issue of public policy. One of the key interventions to promote healthy eating in socio-economically disadvantaged local areas is the community food initiative (CFI). This dissertation reports the findings of a comparative, cross-national study of two umbrella CFIs, a shop based co-op initiative in Edinburgh, Scotland and a box scheme initiative in Toronto, Canada. The main aim of the study was to explore the process by which CFIs approach their key goal of increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables among users, and to assess the extent to which this goal is achieved. The more specific objectives were: first, to investigate the extent of change in users' purchasing and consumption behaviour and perceptions of the initiatives; secondly, to investigate and contrast the history and philosophy of the CFIs in order to locate and understand them within the context of the countries' policy developments; and, thirdly, to examine their designs, how they operate and the daily processes involved.

Following a review of the literature on the relevant policy context in each country, a range of methods (participant observation, discussions and interviews with people working in various capacities at the initiatives and documentary sources) was used to develop an understanding of the operation, origin and values of the initiatives. A qualitative panel study design was undertaken, with two in-depth interviews carried out over a six-month period with the parents of young children who had recently begun to use their local CFI (eleven parents in Edinburgh and ten parents in Toronto). The main focus of the interviews was on users' perceptions and experiences of food provisioning, purchasing, preparation, cooking and eating, with a view to understanding the process of change in households' food choices and any barriers to such change. The study also explored the respondents' interests in, and attitudes towards, their CFI in the context of their experience of using other food shopping outlets, the social gains from using the CFI, and the influence of their wider interests in the community, food, farming and the environment.

While use of the CFIs did result in the consumption of more fruit and vegetables among all study participants, the extent to which this happened was dependent upon many factors, including: respondents' opportunity to continue to use the initiatives in relation to their time constraints; interests in supporting community initiatives; wider concerns about food, farming and the environment; and the levels of confidence, motivation, skills and knowledge to prepare and cook fruit and vegetables. In general, the initiatives were of most benefit to those who were sufficiently competent and confident to attempt to cook meals that incorporated a wide range of fruit and vegetables. Different types of intervention will be required in future to empower individuals who lack the skills, knowledge and confidence to prepare and consume more fruit and vegetables to change their food consumption practices.

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Abbreviations

Produce	fresh fruit and vegetables
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
CAFB	Canadian Association of Food Banks
CAQDAS	Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CFIs	Community Food Initiatives
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
ECFI	Edinburgh Community Food Initiative
FHAC	Food and Hunger Action Committee
FSA	Food Standards Agency
FTT	Field To Table
GFB	Good Food Box
GIS	Geographical Information System
HT2000	Healthy Toronto 2000
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
NUDIST	Non-numerical Unstructured Data. Indexing, Searching, Theorising
OHCC	Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OPHA	Ontario Public Health Association
PAT 13	Policy Action Team: 13
SCDP	Scottish Community Diet Project
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
TFPC	Toronto Food Policy Council
WHO	World Health Organisation

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Chapter 1 Community Food Initiatives in Context

1.1 Introduction

The subject of food is increasingly becoming a focus for social policy. Previously it has been included as part of another area of study or seen as a 'second division' area of Social Policy, rather than being addressed in its own right (Lang 1999). "Food issues are closely bound up with public health, housing, income support, agriculture, planning and land use, economic development, education and community services" (FHAC 2000, p.3). This study explores community food initiatives (CFIs) and examines food issues in relation to health, poverty and social policies. It involves a comparison of two umbrella CFIs; a shop approach co-op initiative in Edinburgh called the Edinburgh Community Food Initiative (ECFI), the other a box scheme in Toronto run by Field To Table (FTT). These initiatives assist people on low incomes or living in disadvantaged areas to overcome the barriers to enjoying a healthy diet: mainly the lack of available and affordable healthy foods, accessible local shops and an awareness of a balanced diet (ECFI 1997a). The two initiatives in this research had similar aims and operational challenges but adopted different means to address them, which reflected their respective histories and working philosophies.

The governments of Canada and Britain promote healthy eating as one way to improve their populations' quality of life and state of well being. However, at present, food is treated as a commodity and therefore a component of the market system. Field (1999) believes the market system is inadequate in ensuring people can eat healthily, as nutritious, safe food is not available to all. Food as a commodity creates structural barriers for many people regarding access to and consumption of nutritious food. Globalisation, subsequent economic restructuring and welfare cutbacks over the last twenty years have resulted in an increasing number of people being unable to afford to eat healthily through consuming nutritious food (Riches 1997; Webster 1998). To go without nutritious food can lead to long-term health problems that affect individuals' physical and mental well being. Being without food also brings into question citizens'

‘rights’ to food (Field 1999). CFIs aim to overcome some of the barriers people face to enable them to access nutritious food.

This chapter aims to set out the background and relevant factors around CFIs in Canada and Scotland. Firstly, it will consider the balance of health, poverty and wider concerns that have led to the formation of ‘social and political space’ to support CFIs. Then the role of CFIs in addressing food concerns at a community level will be explored. Lastly, current wider structural factors relating to food issues are outlined.

1.2 Health and Food

1.2.1 Canada

In 1974 the Canadian Federal Department of Health and Welfare produced the influential report by Marc Lalonde, ‘A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians’ (Lalonde 1974). This was the first statement by any national government recognising that health results from the interplay of a variety of causal factors related to biology, lifestyles, environment and the healthcare system, rather than mainly focusing on the prevailing model of the healthcare system (Kickbusch 1994). These causal factors formed the ‘Health Field concept’, which provided a framework from which Canada developed its broad health-promotion perspective (Kickbusch 1994, p.11). This broad perspective and the subsequent health promotion action taken in Canada has been recognised internationally and has played an important role in the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) work (Kickbusch 1994; McQueen 1994). In recognition of Canada’s experience and commitment towards health promotion, the first international conference on health promotion was held in Ottawa in 1986. At the conference, emphasis was placed on the premise that to have a healthy nation, action was needed to ensure everyone’s basic needs were met, including adequate food and income (Higgins 1992, p.155). The resulting Ottawa Charter placed a large emphasis on strengthening community action, as part of five areas of activity to develop health promotion strategies (McQueen 1994, p.342), again signifying a health approach beyond the health care

system. The Canadian health promotion strategy was considered to be progressive and impressive in regard to the government's commitment towards pursuing the strategy (Kickbusch 1994). It involved inter-departmental working with shared visions and action to incorporate health promotion into all levels of work. The role and empowerment of communities continued to be the central focus for health promotion (McQueen 1994, p.343). By 1994, Canada had placed more resources in health promotion than any European country, and subsequently had more health promotion activity when compared to Britain (McQueen 1994, p.354).

Within this broad perspective the Province of Ontario, within which Toronto is located, has played a leading role in incorporating wider social and economic factors, including food issues, in its health strategy (Pederson & Signal 1994, p.244). The Provincial Ontario government's recognition that health is influenced by factors beyond the scope of health education and treatment was evident in the 1992 'Nurturing Health' document (OPHA 1995). It also had a number of food and nutrition initiatives, where adequate nutrition was seen as a pre-condition to a healthy population (OPHA 1995). Non-government organisations (NGOs) have had a strong role in influencing the provincial government in its health promotion strategy. For instance, the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), involving community health activists, proposed a food and nutrition strategy in line with those that had been adopted by other provinces, in order to improve the health of citizens (OPHA 1995, p.255). Ontario has taken a broad outlook regarding the factors that can interact in order to improve the population's health.

Within Ontario, Toronto in 1989 developed its 'Healthy Toronto 2000' (HT2000) strategy where city policy incorporated a broad definition of health into a wide range of its objectives. This strategy influenced the WHO's Healthy Cities strategy (Kickbusch 1994, p.12). The health field concept behind the strategy and subsequent other 'Healthy Communities' projects in Canada developed to include social and economic factors as determinants of health. Higgins (1992) comments that the research evidence linking social conditions and health was so consistent that 'even' the Conservative government

acknowledged their impact on health. The 1989 HT2000 strategy was considered radical because it addressed the need to manage healthier social environments to support individuals in practising healthier behaviour, rather than the more conventional approach of influencing individuals to change their behaviour (Kickbusch 1994, p.13). It tried to move away from the idea that health was an entirely individual responsibility, although it was still criticised for focusing too much on the individual rather than on wider structural changes (Higgins 1992).

Canada's focus on making health promotion an important part of health policies built a foundation for strategies where the importance of food as a health issue was highlighted. The health promotion strategies have also led to a history of community groups playing an important role in addressing health promotion issues (Higgins 1992). Community-based health projects are evident in Toronto, such as the Community Quality of Life projects. These types of projects involve community members identifying and acting upon social determinants of health by drawing on their experience and developing an understanding of how societies operate (Raphael 2002, p.16). This history has provided a background for community groups to be involved in health-promoting activities. However, criticism exists around the extent to which emphasis is still being placed on the role of the individual to change his or her behaviour rather than considering wider societal determinants of health. "The lifestyle or behavioural approach to disease prevention and health promotion clearly remains the dominant paradigm in Canadian public health work. This is the case despite 25 years of Canadian government policy statements trumpeting the importance of the societal determinants of health" (Raphael 2003, p.185).

1.2.2 Scotland

Britain's government followed a different path from Canada in recognising and creating strategies, incorporating social factors and food as an important element in improving the health of the population. Britain took longer to undertake wider health strategies and health promotion as a means of improving the nation's health. The Conservative

government suppressed the 1980 Black Report on inequalities in health and persistently denied that health problems and unhealthy diets were related to socio-economic factors (Lang 1997a). NGOs and academics reacted by emphasising a wide variety of evidence and research that income differentials were widening and leading to different diets and food choices which related to health differentials, such as life expectancy based on social class (Lang, 1997b, provides an account of the relevant research findings from the 1970s to 1990s). In the mid-1980s there was much debate about whether it was possible to enjoy a healthy diet on a low income (Lang 1997a).

The mid-1990s saw a change in government direction. Research evidence showed a strong link between poverty, food, nutrition and health, such as the findings from the Low Income Project Team for the nutrition task force in 1996 (Department of Health 1996). It was evident that poor health was more prevalent among those with low incomes and poor diets, through being unable access affordable appropriate foods. The importance of food and nutrition, in relation to income and health, was back on the agenda after having been ignored since 1979 (Lang 1994; Lang 1997b). A change in government policy was signalled in 1992, with the white paper, 'Scotland's Health - A Challenge To Us All', which acknowledged the effect of food and poverty on health and diet (Scottish Office 1992). The Scottish Diet Report was released in 1993 (Scottish Office 1993) followed by 'Eating for Health - 1996 Scottish Diet Action Plan' (Scottish Office 1996). The report identified Scotland as having one of the worst diets in Europe and acknowledged the link between this fact and the relatively poor health of the Scottish population. The plan had seventy-one action points designed to have a positive effect on Scotland's diet and has been used for developing a framework for food policy in Scotland. The plan is praised for covering all sectors involved in food, from the supply to demand side, in pursuit of long term health improvements (Lean & Anderson 2000). "Scotland is unusual in having a very carefully calculated, nutritionally consistent food policy which was written with multi-disciplinary input with health as its primary motivation" (Lean & Anderson 2000, p.6). The plan aimed to improve the whole population's health, not just certain socio-economic groups (West Lothian Health

Challenge 1997; Lean and Anderson 2000). The action plan recommended that a national project officer should be appointed to pursue a strategic approach to tackle the dietary problems that people living on low incomes experience at a community level (Scottish Office 1996). As a result the Scottish Community Diet Project (SCDP) was established to support and disseminate information to all CFIs in Scotland. Included in the SCDP's role was the allocation of funding specifically for small scale CFIs. In England, The report by Acheson (1998), highlighted the need to provide more affordable and varied food in disadvantaged areas as one way in which to tackle health inequalities. The 1999 white paper 'Towards a Healthier Scotland' supported a continuation of the Scottish Diet Action Plan and the appointment of a national dietary co-ordinator to oversee the implementation of the plan (Scottish Office 1999a). The Scottish Executive continues to work towards the 1996 Diet Action Plan recommendations.

In Scotland, health policies have had a direct effect on the development of CFIs and continue to play a role in supporting them. This political support is influenced by the fact that, nationally, the Scottish population's diet is considered to be poor and action to change this is high on the political agenda. This political and social attention to improving the nation's health has presented the opportunity for community groups to take action on their own food and health problems.

1.2.3 Health, Diet and Inequalities

What we eat has a profound effect on our health and wellbeing (Scottish Office 1996). Governments in Canada and Britain have published similar guidelines about what constitutes a healthy diet. "The evidence is overwhelming that a diet rich in complex carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables and moderate in protein and fat is healthy for most people" (TFPC 1997). It is estimated that in seventy per cent of all diseases, diet is a significant risk factor (TFPC 1997). "The Scottish diet is notoriously bad and, next to smoking, is the most significant contributor to our poor health record, including our high rates of early death from coronary heart disease, cancers and stroke" (Scottish Office 1996). Similarly, in Ontario heart disease is the leading cause of death (OPHA 1995,

p.37). Both countries have set health targets, which are mainly diet-related (see Scottish Office 1996; OPHA 1995, p.33). Health care in both countries is publicly funded through taxation, which means that everyone pays for individuals' illnesses due to inadequate diets, in addition to the social costs incurred (TFPC 1997; Webster 1998, p.10; Gardner & Haliwell 2000; Lang & Rayner 2003, p.71). "Poor eating is as much a drag on national economic activity as it is on personal health" (Gardner & Haliwell 2000, p.35). Yet, "the costs to human health (and in turn the nation) of the types of diet that are made readily available by our food supply chain have yet to be addressed in any systematic way" (Barling & Lang 2003, p.18). Poor diets are linked to high health care costs through treating diet-related illnesses like heart disease, cancers and strokes. It is therefore seen as being in the nation's economic, as well as social, interest that nutritious food is available.

The Canadian and Scottish population as a whole need to improve their diets to improve their health (McCormick 2000; TFPC 1997). In particular, research has found that people on low incomes living in deprived areas generally have diets worse than higher-income groups in society (Higgins 1992, pp.120-1; Department of Health 1996; Riches 1997). People on low incomes are more likely to have diets that lack variety and include a low intake of nutrients, which are needed to protect against diseases (Dowler 2002, p.706). The lower the variety of food households consume, the more likely the children of the households are to have poor eating patterns and consume fewer vitamins and minerals than other children (Searle 2002). This can have consequences for the children's physical and mental development (Searle 2002). People on a low income are more likely to experience limited access to opportunities to enhance their diet (Department of Health 1996). Poverty is a key factor in health (Raphael 2002, p.2). There is a particular need to encourage and provide an opportunity for people on a low income to adopt a healthier diet by tackling the problems they face, such as a lack of affordable foods.

The level of economic inequality exacerbates the health difference between those on low incomes and other higher social groups. The overall health of a society appears to be more determined by social and economic inequalities among its members than the overall wealth of the society (Lean & Anderson 2000, p.13; Raphael 2001, p.xi). Inequalities need to be addressed, beyond an increase in income for those in the bottom social groups to improve their health. Lean and Anderson (2000) argue for a change to the whole system of food consumption and food supply in order to optimise the health of the whole population, as a means to improve the health of those in the bottom social groups. Raphael (2001; 2002; 2003) argues that living on a low income, combined with government policies that limit access to basic needs, contributes to the process of social exclusion. Social exclusion is the process and means by which living on a low income leads to a higher chance of suffering from poor health, including heart disease (Raphael 2001). Therefore reducing social exclusion by the distribution of wealth would help improve the cardiovascular health of Canadians (Raphael 2001). Raphael points out that, poverty limits our control over our lives through our ability to access services and participate in everyday activities. This limits food choices, self-esteem and self-worth. Living on a low income is a major cause of poor health, especially heart disease (Raphael 2001). Both countries' policies now recognise a difference related to socio-economic determinants in their populations' health and both highlight the need for action to address this.

1.3 Food, Poverty and Rights

1.3.1 An Adequate Income to Purchase Nutritious Food

Since the 1980s, Canada and Britain have shifted away from a commitment to welfare entitlements, with rights to a minimum income being eroded (Riches 1997, p.59). Recession and economic restructuring in the 1980s led to an increase in the rate of unemployment and the need for welfare assistance. This was at a time when entitlement to welfare was reduced and the value of actual welfare benefits was decreased. Riches describes these changes as the re-commodification of social assistance going back to the

Poor Law principles of less eligibility and the only perceived legitimate claim to benefits is when the claimant has an established commitment to the labour market. Therefore, people's entitlement to income support is directly related to their capacity to sell their labour as a commodity in the market place (Riches 2002, p.659). As a result of this reduction in both entitlement and the amount of money received, more people were unable to afford enough food for a healthy diet. Food is often a flexible item on budgets: consumption is reduced in order to pay other bills and debt when money is limited (Craig & Dowler 1997; Riches 1997, p.55; Cole-Hamilton & Lang 1986). In Dowler and Calvert's study of single parents, debt arrears were the main factors associated with poor nutrition (1995b). When housing costs increased in Canada this exacerbated the problem of the number of people on low incomes who experienced the effects of poverty (Evans & Stoveld 1997). In Toronto, housing benefit was included in a household's overall welfare benefit payment, rather than being a separate payment, as found in Britain. This had the effect that as rent prices increased the amount of benefit left for a recipient to spend on other essentials decreased and left families unable to pay their bills and adequately feed their families (Daily Bread Food Bank 1996). A lack of food has been seen as a 'symptom' of an eroded safety net and the result of government cutbacks, with even developed 'rich' countries having many underfed people (Gardner & Haliweil 2000, p.35; Roberts 2001, p.11).

In both countries, low-income families spend less money on food than other income groups, but this amount represents a higher percentage of their total income (about 30%) than that of higher-income families (about 16%) (Dowler 1998, p.61; TFPC 1997, p.10). Dobson et al.'s study of people living on low incomes found, that despite the respondents' spending a large proportion of their income on food, they were skilled budgeters working from a limited budget rather than wasteful with their money (1994, p.34). "Poorer households are the most efficient purchasers of nutrients per unit cost" (MAFF 1996; cited in Dowler 1998, p.61). Low-income people do not have sufficient incomes to buy nutritious food, despite being efficient shoppers. Often the prevailing argument in both countries has been to advocate an increase in the level of benefits and

access to income through a decent wage, thereby allowing an adequate income to purchase food. Being unable to afford adequate food has implications for health and the right to access healthy food.

In Canada, the increase in poverty in the 1980s led to concerns about the rise in the number of people experiencing 'hunger'. An increasing number of people were going hungry because of an "inability to obtain sufficient, nutritious, personally acceptable food through normal food channels or they had the uncertainty that they would be able to do so" (Davis and Tarasuk 1994, p.51). When more people experienced a fall in their income and had difficulty in purchasing sufficient food for their household, official documents and the media often presented the problem as people going 'hungry', as an emotive subject in order to gain a response to the situation. This led to 'emergency food relief' through the handing out of food at newly established food banks. Hunger, caused by lack of financial access to food, had re-emerged in an advanced industrial country with a developed welfare state (Riches 1997).

In Britain, research showed that poverty, however measured, had increased in the 1980s, with some parents going without food so that their children could eat (Cole- Hamilton & Lang 1986; Kempson 1996; Dowler and Calvert 1995b). However, the image of and reference to 'hungry people' were, and are still, not commonly used in Britain and food banks have not been widely used or promoted. Often the term 'food poverty' is used to refer to "the inability of households to afford to maintain a healthy diet" (Killeen 2000).

Increasing an individual's income to avoid food poverty is considered to relate to an individual's rights to a sufficient income and food as a necessity of life (Killeen 2000; Webster 1998), as outlined by many UN declarations (Riches 2001). For instance, the 1989 UN Convention on the Child states a child's right to food (Lean & Anderson 2000). A right to food is part of modern citizenship and should take into consideration the problems in relation to food access created by the current market system (Webster

1998, p.9). Food as a human right is a way to reframe the debate about food poverty and suggests action beyond welfare responses (Dowler et al. 2001; Riches 2002, p.660)

1.3.2 Food Security

In the late 1980s some academics and organisations involved in food issues across Canada, began to shift their focus away from believing that an increase in income was the panacea to the problem of people accessing sufficient food (Riches 1997; Tarasuk & Davis 1996). Dissatisfaction by NGOs with the response and action taken around the concept of 'hunger' led to the development of the term 'food security', which linked poverty, health and rights, as well as wider environmental and agricultural factors. The concept has dominated the Canadian approach towards CFIs more than health promotion activities. Food security has no one simple definition. As Maxwell points out, the term has become a 'cornucopia of ideas' as food security can refer to many different levels and contexts: national, regional, community, household and individual (1998). In relation to 'developed' countries, such as Canada and Britain, their populations are considered food secure, but certain individuals and communities can suffer from food insecurity at the local level. Community food security is when people at all times:

Can get enough food to eat that is safe, that they like to eat and that helps them to be healthy. They must be able to get this food in ways that make them feel good about themselves and their families (OPHA 1995, p.2).

The definition refers to individuals not only having an adequate amount of food for survival but also food that involves an element of choice. These food choices are to take into account personal taste, health and nutrition, social and cultural preferences. The food must also be made available in a way that is culturally acceptable and in a dignified manner; when the opposite is true, there is 'food insecurity'. This concept of food security lies at the heart of the Canadian approach. The definition is focused at the community level. It emphasises the fact that food security should also be based around the existence of a sustainable food production system (TFPC 1994, p.8). Sustainable

food systems include addressing environmentally friendly farming practices and promoting locally farmed foods.

Tackling barriers to accessing affordable nutritious food through income and health promotion approaches alone is insufficient to ensure food security. The whole process of the food system (production, distribution and consumption) needs to be addressed (Lang 1994, TFPC 1994). “The food system must be redesigned around the principles of nourishment, human development and environmental sustainability” (Oxfam 1995, p.28). Central to the term food security is an individual’s right to food and thus the right to be ‘food secure’. “Perhaps the key question to be asked about hunger in Canada today is ‘how is it that the Canadians proclaim their right to health care... when basic human needs are left unmet and rights to food security, adequate incomes and freely chosen work are not addressed?’ ” (Riches 1997, p.47). The changes required to address this holistic view of food security and restructuring food policy are covered in more depth at the end of the chapter.

In Scotland, the concept of food poverty has expanded to consider how food fits into the social exclusion people experience, as shown in the Scottish Executive report (1999b) ‘Social Inclusion: Opening the Door to a Better Scotland’. The inclusion of food and nutrition in social inclusion discussions is a move towards focusing on wider factors that influence food access. To be able to obtain nutritious food is linked with ‘rights of citizenship’ related to economic, political and social factors (Dowler 2000). Only recently in British documents has there been reference to the application of the concept of ‘community food security’ when talking about issues related to food access in Britain, whereas this is a common theme in Canadian documents. This increasing use of the term signifies a continuing shift to focus on an individual’s ‘right’ to be food secure rather than focusing on what he/she ‘needs’ in their diet in order to be healthy (Dowler et al. 2001).

While the term food poverty is similar in many ways to food insecurity definitions (Hobbiss 1999), the distinction is more than semantic: it has influenced the understanding of the situation and subsequent action taken (Tarasuk & Davis 1996, p.73). In Canada, discussions and action around hunger and food security have dominated food concerns. However, the history of extensive community development projects as part of health promotion strategies, along with the support of health and food groups concerned about people going hungry, has had an influence in developing some anti-hunger and community food security initiatives. In contrast, in Scotland until recently, despite people experiencing food access problems due to poverty, the focus at the policy level continues to be mainly related to health. More recently, food poverty has been included through a focus on social inclusion. In Scotland, the focus of CFIs on health reflects the source of the funding and where support of these initiatives has come from. Also, it reflects the fact that often Scotland's poor health record dominates in importance over poverty, even though both are inherently related. Both countries are considering the social and cultural value of food with the move towards addressing food security (factors related to health, income, rights and food access).

1.4 Community Responses

In both countries, CFIs have been proposed as a way to address barriers to food access at a community level. However, CFIs can only operate as part of the solution; structural changes at a higher level are required, especially if the overall aim is to achieve sustained food security (Lipski et al. 1998). Some people in Canada and Britain experience similar barriers to enjoying a healthy diet due to financial constraints. These barriers, which include poor access to local shops, poor availability of affordable and healthy food, and a lack of awareness of a balanced diet, compounded with cultural, social and environmental factors (ECFI 1997a, Evans & Stoveld 1997), will be explored in the next chapter. The different food projects that have emerged to tackle these problems fall into three categories, namely charity, strategic and community food projects, although some initiatives have elements of all three.

1.4.1 The Charity Response

Influenced by the United States, Canada responded to the increase in poverty in the 1980s by introducing food banks to feed the hungry (Riches 1987, p.135). Food banks were initially an emergency response at the ground level by the voluntary sector until action at a structural level, such as higher welfare payments and a reduction in the number of people unemployed had been undertaken. The number of food banks has increased dramatically since 1981 when the first Canadian food bank opened in Edmonton. As well as an increase in numbers, there has been an increase in their usage rate, with this doubling from 1987 to 1997 (Lipski et al. 1998). Of all the provinces, Ontario has had the highest usage of food banks (Riches 1997). An estimated 250,000 people using them in Ontario on a monthly basis in 1995 (Biddle 1995, p.3), and just over 300,000 people (123,380 households) using one in March 2003 (a month with neither high nor low demand) (Daily Bread Food Bank 2003, p.1). A variety of people regularly use food banks, including families with children, students, the elderly and people receiving welfare benefits. The Canadian Association of Food Banks (CAFB) estimates that 2.5 percent of Canada's 31 million residents use food banks for assistance (Parsons 2003). Despite this, food banks are still perceived by the public to be predominantly used by the homeless (Daily Bread Food Bank 1996).

In their simplest form, food banks operate from a variety of community and religious buildings. Volunteers who run them hand out donated food to those who come and ask for it. Due to the fact that food banks are charities, they have inherent problems associated with them. Food banks do not ensure that the food is healthy, or of a decent quality or that a sufficient quantity of food is available. "Food is not equally available to all. Only wasted or unwanted food, much of dubious nutritional value, is handed out to the poor. Hunger is primarily a political issue and a matter of distributive justice" (Riches 1997, p.57). People have to queue, sometimes prove that they are in need, and go through the stigmatising and undignified process of collecting food over which they usually have little choice or control. One study of women who used food banks in Toronto found that, despite having access to extra food, the women still lacked nutritious

diets and experienced food insecurity (Tarasuk et al. 1998, p.23). Another, more recent study of just under 1,800 households that used food banks in Ontario found almost 40 percent of children went hungry at least once a month and 80 percent of parents sacrificed their own food to ensure that their children were fed (Wilson 2003).

This form of charity has been integrated into everyday life and has become the accepted response for addressing hunger both by the public and at the political level. As a response to hunger, the Canadian people are gradually accepting food banks. This acceptance takes the pressure off the government to take structural action to change the situation, thereby leading to the depoliticisation of the issue as the voluntary sector steps in to provide support (Riches 1987; Poppendeick 1995). The lack of government action directed at addressing the root causes of hunger has led to the argument that food banks indicate the failure of public policy and market forces to feed people (TFPC 1997). Food banks fail to have an impact on food security or health because they do not address structural issues (TFPC 1994). Hunger is political; it requires acknowledgement by the community and the state as a fundamental matter of human rights (Riches 1997, p.47). The definition of the problem as 'hunger' and the development response of subsequent food banks have failed to undertake a long-term analysis of the situation (Riches 1997; Poppendeick 1999).

Food banks have not been a British response to food access problems, perhaps reflecting the fact that 'food poverty' rather than 'hunger' has been used to define the situation. In 2000, the debate about distributing surplus food and the form that this could take was started by Sustain and Crisis FareShare through "Too much and too little? Debates on surplus food redistribution" (Hawkes & Webster 2000). Britain currently has projects that redistribute surplus food to organisations, such as homeless shelters, but not to individuals through food banks. The projects, such as Crisis FareShare, also require the surplus food to be nutritious, as their overall aim is to provide homeless people with healthy, rather than basic, food. In the UK, the number of people experiencing food poverty or food security is unknown, as no national survey looks at nutrition and diet in

low-income households. However, the Food Standards Agency has been commissioned to carry out a survey that will identify the number of food insecure households. It will report in 2005 (Dowler 2002, p.702).

1.4.2 Strategic Action

Many community organisations and NGOs operate at a policy level to address different food security issues, such as Oxfam in both countries, Sustain in Britain and FoodShare in Ontario. These groups sometimes work with anti-poverty organisations, or food security groups, or focus on poverty reduction and economic development rather than food issues (Lipski et al. 1998; Tarasuk & Davis 1996, p.74). Advocating change and raising political awareness for food poverty can be difficult, especially in Britain, where the term hunger is not used. Taking action, such as through food projects, can have more rewarding short-term benefits once they are running, but in order to achieve long-term success food access must be addressed at the policy formulation stage. This can be more challenging and less rewarding in the short-term but is essential for long term beneficial structural changes (Webster 1998).

Dowler and Caraher (2003) points out that not enough food projects in Britain take an advocacy role, perhaps because they receive government funding, thereby compromising their advocacy role. “The current plethora of food projects, while being promoted as a way of meeting the needs of low-income groups, in fact are not realising their full potential to act as a means of advocacy. In practice, such a potentially radical focus is not encouraged by funders, who tend to resist behaviour which may be construed as ‘political’” (Dowler and Caraher 2003, p.61). However, Scotland is slightly more politically active than other parts of the UK through the assistance of the SCDP in enabling projects to network and be more vocal about issues from the grassroots level. Local authorities in the UK do not have any duty to either ensure affordable food is available locally or that people have a sufficient income to obtain food (Dowler 2002, p.710). It is difficult to advocate action at the local level towards ensuring food as a right, when the local authority has no responsibility to ensure this.

In Canada, some of the large food bank organisations have aimed to do more than alleviate food poverty through redistributing surplus food. Nationally the CAFB, and provincially organisations such as Toronto's Daily Bread Food Bank, have been powerful advocates for the eradication of hunger (Riches 2002, p.651). CAFB have played an active role in national anti-poverty advocacy and support for a food security movement in Canada (Riches 2002, p.652). The Food and Hunger Action Coalition (2000; 2001) in Toronto, which includes the work of the Daily Bread Food Bank and community food organisations, produced the Phase one report 'Planting the Seeds' in 2000. The report highlighted the range and patchwork of food programmes across the city and how they related to city policies and programmes. From here the coalition developed Phase two, the report 'The Growing Season' and a Food Charter that the city has adopted. The charter claims food as a right for Toronto citizens. Other cities in Canada, such as Kamloops, BC and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, have also done this. The Toronto Food Charter outlines the city's commitment to food security and states that it will promote food security for its citizens.

1.4.3 Community Food Initiatives as a Solution

CFIs involve the community in taking practical action against the barriers faced when trying to obtain affordable, nutritious food. In contrast to the charity model, CFIs aim to improve people's health and also provide opportunities for increased community action and spirit (OHCC 1997, p.3; McGlone et al. 1999). "CFIs are being championed as a way of meeting the needs of low-income households for accessible, good quality food at prices that can be afforded. They are part of local and national strategies for social inclusion" (Dowler 2000, p.26). A variety of CFIs have emerged, such as box schemes, community co-ops, community cafes and kitchens, community gardens, tasting sessions and cooking classes.

The most common initiatives in Ontario are box-schemes, and in Scotland food co-ops. Box schemes and co-ops save money by buying food in bulk and passing the savings on to their members. They are non-profit making schemes that normally rely heavily on

local volunteers. Usually the sale of food is accompanied by information about healthy eating, tasting sessions, recipes and cooking sessions to enhance cooking skills. They aim to support communities to increase their control of the food they consume and offer choice and quality (Department of Health 1996). CFIs in Canada follow community food security approaches, as opposed to the charity approaches of food banks. Through tackling the barriers of affordability, availability, accessibility of food and awareness of healthy eating, the initiatives are trying to tackle poverty and health problems at the community level.

The operation of CFIs has recently gathered more attention, in regard to the social gains resulting from participating in initiatives and their subsequent potential to build 'social capital' (Dowler 2000). " 'Social capital' is the social support and civic engagement that builds trust in neighbourhoods and in society at large. It can result from activities as diverse as taking part in community group meetings, exchanging childcare and neighbours being involved in neighbourhood watch schemes and voting" (Webster 1998, p.5). "Community projects can help to overcome social isolation, give people a sense of worth and increase a feeling of well-being" (Dowler et al. 2001, p.90). Participation in food projects by community members, therefore has the potential to contribute to building social relations and networks in a local area. The desired outcomes of community food security projects are increased community empowerment, enhanced personal health and economic development (OHCC 1997, p.3). At present the term 'social capital' has swung in favour of CFIs; "CFIs hit all the right buttons of social inclusion, community development, bottom-up self-help, local ownership and skills transfer" (McCormick 2000, p.52). However, Dowler (2000) and McCormick (2000) warn that the attractiveness of CFIs could lead to unrealistic expectations about what they are capable of achieving, especially as many CFIs struggle to survive and become sustainable.

Research on twenty-five CFIs in Britain (McGlone et al. 1999) and ten in Ontario (Lipski et al. 1998) identified social gains, such as confidence and self-esteem, as important aspects that are central to achieving nutritional and health benefits. The research also highlighted key factors that were intrinsic in achieving success for any CFI. These factors included the willingness to experiment and take risks in offering multi-faceted initiatives in order to service the diverse needs of the community. The chance of success increased where the CFI had professional support and collaboration from community partners. The volunteers and participants needed to be involved in decision-making and ownership of the projects. The key to many CFIs' success was the presence of dynamic workers who had strong personalities or leadership skills, along with being good project facilitators (Lipski et al. 1998; McGlone et al. 1999).

Often the projects rely heavily on volunteers' time and efforts. Another problem within initiatives can be maintaining a shared vision and joint working between the volunteers and paid employees. A lack of group cohesion can lead to disruption and a lack of direction and purpose (McGlone et al. 1999; OHCC 1997).

Sustaining CFIs can be problematic, given the length of time it can take to establish them and gain credibility within the community. On average, it takes two years for CFIs in Britain to establish themselves within their local communities (McGlone et al. 1999). Funding of CFIs was often found to be uncertain and contributed to instability and uncertainty about their future. To help address this problem, the SCDP awards small grants towards the start up and continuation of CFIs, as well as holding events and seminars on the process of running and evaluating CFIs. Canada has had no specific funding earmarked for CFIs.

Storage space can also be a problem for initiatives that are dealing with a large amount of fresh produce (Scottish Office 1996). The Scottish Diet Action Plan points out that CFIs' "potential is underdeveloped because of difficulties in purchasing food at wholesale prices, and the lack of central purchasing and distribution systems" (Scottish

Office 1996). Many events and meetings are organised in both countries to address problems faced by CFIs. Sharing problems, solutions and support is enabled by the SCDP in Scotland and by the initiatives and relevant organisations in Ontario.

“Many social and psychological benefits may accrue to volunteers and users but it is less clear whether long-term dietary or health benefits result from these initiatives” (Anderson et al. 1996, p.6).

Often evaluations of CFIs are problematic, as many funders and professionals want to assess projects’ effectiveness through nutritional changes, yet this is difficult to show (Webster 1998). The Saffron Food and Health project in England (Dobson et al. 2000) did manage to record nutrition changes by building the evaluation process into the project from the start. The project found a community development approach was essential in achieving changes to eating behaviour and attitudes to food. While the project ran, local participants increased their consumption of produce. However, the project experienced similar problems to those outlined above; it took time to become established and accepted by local people and other professionals. Most other community food projects do not have the opportunity to record and evaluate the process of change that occurs from their inception.

Other benefits, such as social benefits, are now regarded as central to any health gains (McGlone et al. 1999) and could be used as an indicator of the effectiveness of CFIs. “A community development project might not lead directly to improved nutritional status but it can reduce anxiety and stress around food and improve the self-esteem of the people involved in the project. Indirectly, this can lead to better health and recent work has indicated that an increase in ‘social capital’ can improve the health of low-income communities” (Webster 1998, p.5). This ‘social capital’ may be increased through social interactions and social gains from participating in CFIs. Dowler et al (2001, p.90) state that local food projects “can contribute to raising the ‘social capital’ of a community. Many of these aspects of community food projects have tended to be over looked in the past.” Therefore, “...if social capital improves health then, by showing that community

food projects increase social capital, it may be possible to begin to develop measurable indicators for judging the effectiveness of such projects” (Webster 1998, p.5). In both countries it has been recognised that CFIs have a continuing role in addressing food access issues, although the research around CFIs’ effectiveness is not extensive and there is not always agreement on the best assessment criteria.

CFIs are only part of the solution to food access issues, as they do not provide comprehensive coverage or integrated solutions for all of the identified barriers. “Though community-based strategies may alleviate the difficulties which families face, they do not have the capacity to replace universal government policies and programmes” (Lipski et al. 1998, p.1). CFIs should complement wider government action to ensure affordable, nutritious food is available to all, rather than being a substitute for government action. “Poverty is acknowledged to be largely responsible for poor health, but by some perverse logic this condition brought about by national fiscal and employment policies is to be addressed by the indigenous efforts of local communities” (Higgins 1992, p.173). Dowler (2000, p.27) has similar concerns to Higgins and asks why low-income communities are expected to do things that professionals and policy-makers have failed to achieve, such as solving the problem of health inequalities.

1.5 The Wider Picture

The Canadian and British governments have not advocated policy changes in order to achieve food security at a community level. Both countries have food security at a national level, as the countries have enough food for their populations, but in practice not everyone has access to this security. To move towards improving individuals’ food security and right to food requires structural changes at the government level. The structural changes would address and integrate a wide range of policy issues ranging from the welfare system through to farming and food production and to town planning.

On a basic level, structural initiatives around employment, income and welfare payments would allow people adequate incomes to access good quality affordable food. However, as food access problems are more than financial and are also related to inequalities, material deprivation and social exclusion, this would not help everyone. Wider structural changes are advocated in order to address a move towards food security involving the supply and demand side of food. On the supply side of food production, sustainable farming, environmental issues and the distance that food travels before reaching consumers would need to be addressed. On the demand side, aspects related to the consumption of food, consumer demands and advertising would be important. Killeen (2000) argues that to address food poverty issues in order to improve the diet of the poorest communities in Scotland would be missing the point, as the average health of the population itself must be improved. Killeen (2000) proposes focusing on achieving food security to address the health concerns of those in poverty, as this would allow us to consider what is dysfunctional about elements of the food system as a whole. This would include those parts of the chain that are beyond the ability of individuals and communities to change.

There is a common belief that we should treat food as a system or network of inter-related features, 'from plough to plate'. Thus healthy food policy must be derived from an understanding of how systems work to enhance or erode health over time. A change in one part of the system affects all parts through a complex set of feedback responses (McCormick 2000, p.4).

To take this 'systems' approach would necessitate co-operation by everyone involved in food production and distribution. It would also require consensus about the outcomes that everyone was working towards. Long-term proposals regarding the future direction of food policy could include the production of more food at a local level and the use of sustainable farming methods. Locally grown produce would help the environment and local employment, as well as dealing with food access barriers (Lang 1997c; Lean and Anderson 2000; Oxfam 1995; Lipski 1993). Health and food concerns need to be an integral part of relevant government policies, education and environmental programmes and every sector of the food system. The challenge is to pull all of these areas (farming,

health and poverty) together under one vision. “While the complexities, commercialisation, and impersonal nature of the current food system render it difficult to conceptualise the links between agriculture and health, the causal relationship between diet and health is widely accepted. By extension then, agriculture and food production are inextricably tied to nutrition and health” (Lipski 1993, p.5).

Field and Mendiratta (1999), through extensive collaboration with different individuals and groups involved in food issues in Ontario, developed ‘Food 2002: Multi-Sectoral Policy Recommendations’. This report tried to address the question of “what would it take for everyone in Ontario to have access to affordable, healthy food by the year 2002?” The report covered a broad range of topics related to food security. From this report, Field (1999) develops an argument, similar to Riches (2001) and TFPC (1997), that food rights and the problem of people being food insecure are related to the fact that food is treated as a commodity in the market system. “The fact that food is treated as a commodity was seen to be an underlying cause (of food insecurity). Because food is a product for profit-making rather than for nourishing people, widespread hunger can persist despite food surpluses” (Oxfam 1995, p.19). The root causes of this commodification of food are the corporate control of the food industry, government policies and consumers’ lack of connection to, and knowledge about, the processes of growing food (Oxfam 1995, p.19). If food were an individual right then democratic government action would reflect this right through intervening in the market system or running initiatives separate from the market system to promote healthy food at affordable prices. The TFPC (1997) proposes that we treat food rights in a way similar to the rights to health and health care. We have a right to health care (in both Canada and the UK), which is universally available. In a similar way, if food were a right, there would be an obligation to ensure that healthy food (mainly fresh fruit and vegetables) was easily available to all citizens. This view has led to arguments for fresh fruit and vegetables to be universally subsidised in a way that would enable the whole population to improve their health (Field 1999, see Rocha (2000) for an example of food security working in this way in a region of Brazil). Currently, the right to food security at a

community and individual level is not high on Scotland's or Canada's political agenda. This leaves the patchwork cover by CFIs to develop in order to address health, poverty and social issues at the community level.

Current Policy

Joined-up food policy has not been apparent by either government. Take for example the case of the United Kingdom. Since the Labour government came to power in 1997 most food related policies have been reactions to health safety issues, such as Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and concerns about genetically modified food. This has distracted attention from the basic issue of food security for all citizens. What is still lacking in the government's approach is overall coherence and strategic thinking (Lang & Rayner 2003, p.66). The Food Standards Agency (FSA), established in 1999, covers all of the UK, aims to protect the consumer's interest in relation to how food is produced and supplied. "The agency's potential for an advisory role that examines the deeper-rooted links between the systems of food production, manufacture, trade, safety and consumption has not been developed" (Barling & Lang 2003, p.12). The government also created the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in 2001. DEFRA has a commitment to make the food supply chain sustainable, safe and competitive. However, still in its infancy, DEFRA has been limited in its ability to take a wide view of food policy to include health and social policy (Barling and Lang 2003, p.8). Public health is addressed through DEFRA "in relation to environmental protection, but fails to grasp the link between public health and a sustainable food supply chain" (Barling & Lang 2003, p.13). For example, it ignores the pollution created by the distance food travels to reach the shops (the food miles) in relation to the social costs. The UK government remains pro-market and pro-trade. "So far the policy link is limited largely to the agri-environment; the wider environmental impacts of the food supply chain, from food miles to energy costs, still need to be addressed... To this extent Labour is not fully engaged with food policy. Indeed, its conception of what food policy is and what it entails remains too narrow" (Barling & Lang 2003, p.18). This observation, allied to the current approach by government, encapsulates the food-issue

problem explored in this wider picture. There is not yet any significant structural change to achieve food security at a community level in either Canada or Scotland.

1.6 Discussion

The different backgrounds to the development of community initiatives in Scotland and Canada relate to health and income issues and to an extent reflect where there has been the 'social and political policy space' in which people could organise themselves to take action. In Canada, CFIs and food issues have arisen from concerns about poverty and food insecurity, which affects one's health. Canada has had many health promotion strategies, which have given it a foundation to develop the role of food and community development in improving the nation's health. While the health promotion perspective in Canada has been important, the main reason behind the development of CFIs has been the problem of poverty and low incomes. A person's 'right' to food has developed as an argument towards developing 'food secure' communities. In Scotland, while CFIs have emerged from poverty concerns at the community level, political and professional support has predominantly grown from health policy and health promotion aims. The Scottish initiatives have addressed what people 'need' to access in order to eat a healthy diet.

In both countries, CFIs tackle the same barriers that some communities face when accessing food. However, their reasons for doing this and subsequent approaches are different. Based on these different backgrounds to food, in relation to health and income, this research sets out to see how any differences are reflected in the structure, process and development of the CFIs being studied.

The research will also consider what differences the country's approach means in terms of the running of the initiatives at the community level. This is aimed at gaining an understanding of how the CFIs' histories and values influence the way they operate.

Often CFIs are championed as a way to address the barriers communities face in accessing healthy, affordable food. In contrast to this view, research by McGlone et al (1999) and Lipski et al (1998) points out that CFIs face many barriers to operating and being sustainable. McGlone et al (1999) conclude that no single design of project in their research emerged as more sustainable or better than another. From the users' perspective, different types of projects could be more effective than other projects in meeting certain users' needs. Looking at CFIs in Toronto and Edinburgh provides the opportunity to see in what ways the most prominent initiative designs - box schemes in Ontario and food co-ops in Scotland - reach and have an effect on their users. From drawing on the literature there has been a limited amount of research into how CFIs are effective from the perspective of the users: for instance how the initiatives have made a difference to food access barriers. The literature highlights that where CFIs improve access to affordable healthy foods they can have a wide range of benefits, such as improved well being and health benefits, social gains, reduced stress and the consumption of more produce. What is unclear is the process by which these changes may or may not occur, and how any changes relate to the users' daily circumstances. What is also unclear is whether users' interests in eating more produce are raised and how they are maintained. An understanding of the processes of any changes that the users experience can highlight why changes may or may not occur and how effective the CFIs are in reaching their users and assisting them with their food access barriers. Therefore, this study aims to identify the processes and the dynamics that work towards changes arising from using CFIs.

Chapter 2 Food Choices and Community Food Initiatives

2.1 Introduction

As highlighted in the previous chapter, structural barriers can prevent people on a low income in Canada and Britain from benefiting from a healthy diet. These structural barriers include poor availability of affordable healthy food and problems associated with accessing shopping facilities. In addition to these barriers, an individual's cultural and social background will also influence the consumption of a healthy diet (ECFI 1997a; Evans & Stoveld 1997). CFIs try to begin to address these structural barriers at the local level through encouraging and enabling households to access and consume more healthy food, primarily more fresh fruit and vegetables (hereafter referred to as 'produce').

In order to understand whether the CFIs are successful in achieving their aims, I will explore the influences that impact on the users with regard to the food choices they make. An individual's food choices will reflect complex interactions. As Woolfe points out, "the many factors influencing food choice include sensory, physiological, psychological and sociological responses by consumers to environmental and economic factors and involve the variety of foods available, and the activities of the wider food industry to promote them" (2000, p.6). To develop a better understanding of any barriers that discourage behaviour change, it is important to know what motivates CFI users in their choice of foods. These motivations are likely to derive from different factors, such as the physical and social environment, personal goals, attitudes and behaviour. Looking at how these interactions affect healthy eating and the use of CFIs can highlight ways to develop initiatives to enable more positive changes in food consumption patterns. While the factors that influence food choices can be listed, there is limited understanding of the extent to which each factor interacts with another (Woolfe 2000).

This chapter considers literature on food choices relating to health and poverty with a view to considering the links between individual choices and the initial and continued use of CFIs. The chapter also addresses food choices that potential CFI users may face, and any changes that could occur from using the CFIs, with regard to the users' own personal, household and social influences and demands. The process of making daily food choices involves the cycle of 'Purchasing, Preparing, Cooking and Consuming' food, as outlined in Figure 2.1. This sequence of stages will provide the basis for the discussion of households' food choices. At times, the distinction between each stage of the process is not entirely clear, but arbitrary. The Purchasing stage is concerned with the acquisition of food, normally through purchasing food, which then determines the food available to be prepared and consumed. This stage highlights the restrictions some low-income households are faced with when purchasing food. The stages of Preparation and Cooking are often inter-related and therefore will be discussed together. These stages concern the roles and responsibilities of household members, the facilities available and the knowledge, skills and confidence required for preparing and cooking food. The final stage, Consumption, concerns households eating together and the factors that relate to healthy eating and the consumption of produce. The chapter will include literature related to 'healthy eating' but in particular 'produce', as most CFIs focus on its promotion and sale.

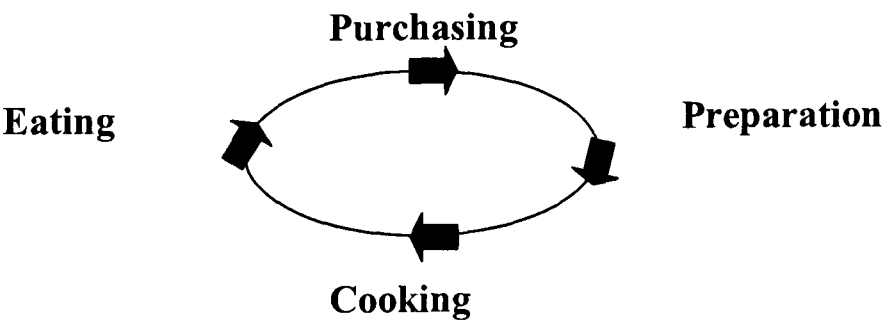


Figure 2.1. The food provisioning process, adapted from Marshall (1995)

2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 Household

Throughout the thesis the term ‘household’ is mainly used in preference to the term ‘family’, unless used in cited references. It was considered that the term ‘family’ does not always encapsulate all the members that belong to and live in one house. The term ‘household’ captures those people perhaps not considered as part of a family unit, such as a single parent’s partner, whose presence could still influence what food is purchased and consumed within the house.

2.2.2 Home Manager

In exploring individuals’ food choices it is important to recognise that choices are made as part of the household in which they belong. Although different household members may influence the use of CFIs, “food related tasks are typically performed by one member... on behalf of all the others as part of the domestic division of labour” (Henson et al. 1998, p.184). This one member, who has the responsibility for the food tasks, is usually the female of the household (Beardsworth et al. 2002; Charles and Kerr 1987; Fuller 2003; Hitchman et al. 2002). Henson et al. (1998) refer to the person with the responsibility for food tasks as the ‘home manager’. The home manager makes food choices taking into consideration the preferences and needs of the household. Charles and Kerr’s research into families’ food choices found that the home managers, despite buying and preparing the food, predominantly based their choices on their family’s tastes and preferences rather than their own (1987). Studies of the activities related to food choices therefore should recognise that most individuals purchase and use food as part of a household. As food selection is a collective household decision, the home manager takes that decision on behalf of the household’s members (Henson et al. 1998, p.184). Food choices are changeable, reflecting different requests and situations faced by the household. The home manager is likely to bring change into the household diet even if they are not the person who wanted the change (Henson et al. 1998). It is likely therefore to be females who use CFIs on behalf of their household members.

2.3 Purchasing Food

This section explores how an individual's motivation and ability to use different shops influence the purchase of food. Purchasing produce can be problematic and stressful for households on a low income. In order to consume a healthy diet, a person needs to be able to purchase the food necessary to do this. Healthier foods can be expensive or unavailable, or the shops can be difficult to access, which contribute to limiting the food options and the possibility of consuming a healthy diet. Within these limitations, home managers buy produce with consideration given to household preferences, tastes and food habits. Although most households on a low income experience similar problems in accessing food, this does not mean they are a homogeneous group (Lang 1997a). They will achieve different diets depending on their household's preferences as well as the limitations of their food budget. Dowler and Calvert's study of lone parents on low incomes found that parents "who aimed to shop for 'healthy', 'fresh' food did achieve better diets for themselves and their children than those who did not" (1995a, p.1). However, being interested in healthy eating is not always enough to ensure that it can be achieved, as it requires a considerable amount of effort and time to overcome any barriers. This section concentrates on the three structural factors that affect food purchasing: accessibility, affordability and availability.

2.3.1 Accessibility

In Canada and Britain, there has been a change towards an oligopolistic food system, where there is limited competition between a small number of producers and sellers. In Canada, five companies control eighty-five percent of food retail sales (Biddle 1995) and in Scotland, six companies control seventy percent of such sales (Sparks 2000). This oligopoly "means higher prices for consumers. It allows companies to use strategies that increase food prices (and their profits)" (Biddle 1995, p.6). The changes reflect the retailers' increase in power over suppliers and manufacturers (Sparks 2000). The more control the main retailers retain, the less control consumers have with regard to the availability of accessible shops, selling affordable and healthy food (Sparks 2000).

In Britain, the commercial dominance of a few retailers, as well as relaxed planning legislation, has led to the construction of many large out-of-town shopping centres. Subsequently, fewer local shops and fewer traditional main street shops remain open (Sparks 2000). Travelling within an urban area of five kilometres without a car, it was possible to access more facilities in 1930 than in 1990 (Whitelegg 1993, p.77). It follows that the average person must travel further than previously to obtain their groceries. Out-of-town facilities are primarily designed around car-owning, affluent consumers. Consequently, people on a low income with low car ownership, combined with less spending power, cannot as easily travel to and use more distant supermarkets (Sparks 2000). Reaching out-of-town facilities by bus or taxi can be expensive and time-consuming, especially if there are both heavy shopping and children to contend with. “Consumers are only better off as a result of modernisation if they have access: if they do not they are very likely to be worse off” (Sparks 2000, p.40). Low-income communities are unlikely to have adequate shopping facilities close to them (McCormick 2000, p.50). The discount stores that have opened in low-income areas, to replace supermarkets, offer competitive prices, but they predominantly sell processed and low-quality food (Brennan 1997; Contini 1998). Hitchman et al. highlighted that their low income respondents were “keenly aware that their poverty excluded them from the consumer experiences of the mass population. They wanted to be able to afford to shop in mainstream supermarkets, and to be able to buy the well-known brands they associated with high quality, rather than European non-labels from the deep discount retailers” (2002, p.30). An inability to access adequate affordable facilities can be a form of social exclusion as low-income communities experience ‘geographical polarisation’. People become “increasingly isolated from mainstream expectations of citizenship” (Dowler 2000, p.22). Limited access to food shopping facilities, particularly in rural areas, can affect decisions and strategies that determine daily food choices (Skerratt 1999). Food choices must be made in the context of the shopping facilities that people can access.

Some of the Canadian population face similar problems in accessing shops, to those experienced in Britain. Research into shopping facilities in Toronto identified gaps in shopping facilities in some low-income areas (TFPC 1997). However, it was also found that due to planning initiatives to ensure small shops operated to meet culturally diverse populations' needs, many food shops could be found throughout the city (TFPC 1997). Roberts warns that there is a need for planners to ensure retail access remains adequate across Toronto, as car-centred shops have a negative effect on food availability for some communities (2001, p.35). "Developments in the USA and UK... point to emerging major structural problems in food retail access for low income people that may be indicative of future problems for (Toronto)" (TFPC 1997, p.11).

These changes in the geographic position of shopping facilities have opened debates as to whether 'food deserts' exist, and if so, how they should be defined (Sparks 2000): that is, whether there are areas where low income communities cannot easily access shopping facilities. Research in Glasgow tried to determine whether some low-income neighbourhoods were disadvantaged in the availability of food because of the location of their homes in relation to shopping facilities (Cummins & Macintyre 1999). The research found that the low-income areas actually had more shops around them than other areas, but the majority of the shops were small independent outlets (Cummins & Macintyre 1999, p.551). These initial findings in Glasgow question the existence of 'food deserts' on the basis of a store count. The research did not investigate access to stores from the communities' perspective. This would have allowed an insight into the food choices available in an area as determined by the communities' food needs and preferences. The low-income communities in the study did not experience a dearth of shops; rather the availability and prices within existing shops were problematic. Some areas of Scotland, therefore, have a problem of localised 'food deserts' in terms of quality, range and price, not the quantity of shopping outlets.

In response to whether or not people have sufficient access to shopping facilities, 'food mapping' has been initiated in different areas of Britain and more recently in Canada

(references for Canada are currently unavailable). This is where communities are actively involved in assessing whether there are sufficient shopping resources in their local area. The research is not just looking at the existence of shops, but considering the food that they sell in relation to affordability and local cultural and community needs. In England, the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) (SEU 2003) produced a report with recommendations on how to improve the problems linked to social exclusion, transport and the location of services, including access to food. From this the Policy Action Team (PAT) 13 produced a paper about improving shopping access for people living in deprived neighbourhoods as part of the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal (Department of Health 1999). The PAT 13 report suggested that 'joined-up' policy on access to shops required action on transport, planning, and urban and rural regeneration, although this has not yet materialised (Department of Health 1999). Both the SEU and PAT 13 reports suggested there is a need to consult local communities to audit access to food outlets. The emergence of any access problems could then be highlighted and addressed.

Donkin et al. (1999) carried out a pilot study of food mapping in two areas of London to identify the geographic location of areas with inadequate access to food. The food outlets were mapped in terms of the food available and the cost through Geographical Information System (GIS) software. The aims of the research included developing the definition of 'adequate access' with the participation of the local neighbourhood to determine their 'real' food choices. They found that the area had shops that offered reasonably priced food but the cost of a healthy diet would require more than 50 percent of the income of someone in receipt of income support. The findings and method of using GIS software influenced and informed other food mapping research. For instance, Sandwell in England used the GIS software and community participatory mapping technique to investigate and improve local access to food. It found that most people in the area studied had access to food shops but they did not have, within walking distance, 'reasonable access' to fruit and vegetables (Dowler et al. 2001b).

2.3.2 Affordability

People on low incomes experience problems in being able to purchase affordable healthy food because of the limited amount of money they have in relation to the cost of the food they can access. Among low-income households, the cost of food is a major barrier to purchasing nutritious food and is believed to be one of the most important factors in determining food choices (Brennan 1997; Leather 1992; Leather 1996). The money available to be spent on food is greatly affected by bills and debt, as food is the most flexible item on households' budgets (Dowler & Calvert 1995b). In a study investigating the relationship between income and eating habits, 400 adults from different income groups in Scotland and England were asked how often they needed more money to buy basic food items. Forty-eight per cent of people on a low income and sixteen per cent of people on a high income responded "every time I go food shopping" (Shepherd et al. 1996, pp.19-21). The lack of money to spend on food can be stressful for parents, rendering shopping an unenjoyable experience (Dowler & Calvert 1995b). Many people on a low income keep a running total of the cost of their shopping bill while shopping. Hichman et al. (2002) noted that the key to shopping on a low income was price awareness, with some individuals knowing the price of staple food items to the penny to avoid over-spending. Whenever possible, parents preferred to shop without their children and sometimes partners, whose presence and demands for expensive and/or unhealthy food choices made it a stressful experience and more difficult to keep track of how much money was being spent (Hitchman et al. 2002).

In spite of the fact that low-income households have less money than other social groups and need to keep costs low, they are the least likely to benefit from the low food prices associated with bulk buying promotions (Ellaway & Macintyre 2000). This is due to the relatively large up front cost involved when buying in bulk and the location of the large supermarkets where these offers are mainly available. In Midlothian, on the outskirts of Edinburgh, a food survey by local residents compared the price of a basket of food purchased from 33 different shops in the area. The basket of food was determined by local residents' food choices. The survey also compared the availability of 'healthy'

food items between shops. There were large differences in the price of the food basket and availability of 'healthy' food depending on where they shopped. There were also price differences, of up to 30 per cent (£4.00 more) for one basket of food, between shops belonging to the same supermarket chain. To use the shops that were less expensive and had a wider range of stock involved travelling the furthest by public or private transport (Midlothian Community Food Survey 1999). The lower food prices that are found at large out-of-town shops have not been experienced equally across all social groups. This has led to the term 'disadvantaged consumers' being used to describe people on a low income who have most lost out from the 'retail revolution' (Ellaway & Macintyre 2000).

Qualitative in-depth interviews were carried out with people from different low-income areas where there were a small number of food shopping outlets. The research found that the majority of respondents employed "complex coping mechanisms to minimise the impact of their poverty" (Hitchman et al. 2002, p.24). To save money, respondents often tried to accommodate special offers, promotions and discounts as they shopped around. The respondents invested a significant amount of effort in a shopping routine that required time and a detailed knowledge of local shops in order to maximise what they could afford to buy. "Rarely was shopping spontaneous or chaotic – rather it was deliberate, time intensive and controlled" (Hitchman et al. 2002, p.24). Low-income households sometimes employ strategies to cut back on the amount of money spent on food by buying the same food every week because they know it will be eaten and not wasted (Dobson et al. 1994; Hitchman et al. 2002). There is less wastage and risk if you "stick to a well known diet that will fill you up" (Leather 1992, p.79).

Buying the same food all the time can lead to diets limited in a variety of tastes, and to an inadequacy of essential vitamins and minerals associated with diets of decreased nutritional quality (Dowler & Calvert 1995b; Hitchman et al. 2002; Searle 2002, p.60). Research exploring what happened to people's food intake and choices when household finances experienced involuntary change found that a change in income had a

destabilising effect on food habits (Shepherd et al. 1996). Overall, a decrease in income led to more home cooking and less foods eaten out of the home, along with less pre-prepared meals. These changes resulted from a mixture of budgeting restrictions and changes in daily circumstances associated with work, such as using canteens or take-away (Anderson and Morris 2000). A decrease in income led to a change in the variety and quantity of foods purchased and eaten over the long-term. This in turn led to a reduction in the intake of several foods currently recommended for a healthy diet (Shepherd et al. 1996). Buying the same affordable foods every week can also lead to less experimentation with food and fewer items of produce being bought because of the high cost involved in experimenting with foods and meals the household might not like. A British survey of 741 adults about attitudes towards increasing fruit and vegetable intake found 23 per cent thought vegetable dishes and 32 per cent thought fruit to be more expensive than other foods (Cox et al. 1996, p.45). This can lead to households not buying fruit because it is not always considered value for money (Dobson et al. 1994).

Research involving single mothers on low incomes found that they were unsure about how much money they would have left to spend on food from week to week. Therefore, shopping strategies were employed. For example, it was easier to control the budget and the household's food if they shopped frequently for a small amount of groceries rather than carrying out one large shopping trip (Dobson et al. 1994). This led Dobson et al. to conclude that any initiative to help mothers on low incomes to buy healthier foods should have a degree of flexibility around the payment and choice of what to buy (1994). Most CFIs do not have this degree of flexibility because they operate weekly or fortnightly, and therefore require bulk buying in order to benefit from the low prices. CFIs offer inexpensive produce and may influence households' food choices by removing cost and travel restrictions. However, if home managers are in the habit of always buying the same food of a limited variety, and perceive produce, especially fruit, to be expensive, they may not be willing to take full advantage of the variety and amount of produce available from the initiatives.

2.3.3 Availability

The availability of different food choices is dependent on the shopping outlets that can be accessed and the affordability and choice within them. The few shops that operate in low-income areas are likely to be small convenience shops where the choice of produce is limited and expensive, and in Scotland, considered to be of low quality. It costs more in both Ontario and Scotland to buy healthy food compared with other foods in low-income areas (Biddle 1995, p.7; Dowler & Craig 1997, p.129). Discount stores that have opened in these areas mainly sell non-perishable items but also stock a small range of fresh items, with produce still being expensive.

The limited availability of produce in certain low-income areas is seen as a significant problem in restricting people's food choices (Lambert et al. 2002). For individuals to increase their food options, motivation to take the time and inconvenience to shop at many different places, or far away from their local area, are required.

If I go to KwikSave there is a fruit shop in there and if I don't like the look of the fruit I don't buy it. I'll just go to another fruit shop until I get what I want, but then I sometimes go to three to four different shops and end up not bothering about fruit today (quoted respondent in Anderson & Cox 2000, p.32).

Many people do not have the time to go from shop to shop to buy their preferred food choices. In addition, people who use many shops normally shop throughout the day. Those with daytime commitments have difficulty in shopping in the evening when the best produce is often sold out (Anderson & Cox 2000). Sparks believes that local facilities of the same standard as superstores are required if healthy food choice is fundamentally an issue of access (2000, p.42).

An individual's control over food choices will be restricted if they experience any of the following barriers: accessibility, affordability and availability. Food choices are dependent upon an individual's ability and willingness to adopt strategies to overcome the obstacles they experience. Purchasing the household's food can be a stressful

experience. Shopping strategies may include spending the time and effort to shop at a distant out-of-town shopping centre or using a variety of local shopping outlets. These strategies result in a wider choice of inexpensive foods. Without these strategies, possibly due to restrictions in time or mobility, or out of necessity, the available food choices can be expensive, limited in variety and restrictive in terms of healthy eating. Other factors that can influence food purchasing, such as household tastes and demands, and the desire to eat certain foods because of health, social and cultural beliefs, will now be considered by examining other aspects of the food provisioning process.

2.4 Food Preparation and Cooking

Food choices will depend on the motivation and ability, usually of the home manager, to transform the food purchased into snacks and meals. Food preparation and cooking require knowledge, skills and confidence. They also require more practical factors, such as time and appropriate facilities. Any influences resulting from using CFIs will be dependent on how the items of produce fit into the user's daily schedules, household preferences and demands.

The terms 'cooking' and 'preparing' can be open to different interpretations. For instance, to some people this might involve simply heating the contents of cans of food, while others would cook the same meals from basic ingredients. The term 'basic ingredients' incorporates foods which come in their natural state, but may have undergone some form of basic processing, for example dairy items, bread and flour. The act of preparing foods to consume can range from simple procedures, such as washing and peeling vegetables, to more skilled techniques such as following elaborate recipes. Cooking, the act of turning prepared food into food ready for consumption, can take different forms, such as baking and frying, and involves different levels of complexity. The preparation and cooking involved in most of the foods eaten will vary for individuals, depending on their mood, time available, facilities, skill, knowledge and confidence.

2.4.1 Skills, Knowledge and Confidence

There has been a fall in the number of people who often cook formal meals from basic ingredients, with the trend towards the consumption of more convenience ready-made meals continuing to rise (Marshall 1995, p.9). Cooking in general requires a complex set of actions, from planning the meal, preparing and serving the food, to clearing up the food and any mess created (Silva 2000). “Many people lack the ideas, knowledge and menu-planning skills necessary to organise a meal. Cooking skills are only one component of bringing together a meal” (Bosley 1999 cited in Caraher et al. 1999, p.595). A survey, of just under 500 respondents in the UK about attitudes and behaviour to food tasks found that females were most likely to do the cooking (76% of the female respondents and 18% of the male respondents). Of the respondents, 60% of females and only 27% of males rated themselves as confident cooks (Beardsworth et al. 2002, p.482). This has implications for how well those who are not confident enough to prepare and cook different foods can turn health messages into reality. Improving cooking skills as part of health promotion objectives could be significant in enabling individuals to be confident enough to make dishes from basic ingredients. “At some point cooking skills appear to empower people not only with skills to prepare food but also with knowledge concerning the preparation of ready-prepared foods, thus adding them in their food purchasing decisions” (Caraher et al. 1999, p.602). Anderson and Morris (2000) point out that, if individuals are able to increase the amount of home cooking they do, it will increase their opportunity to make meals consisting of healthy foods and therefore allow an element of control over eating a healthy diet.

Being able to improve an individual’s cooking skills might offer an opportunity for them to prepare a healthy diet, despite being on a low income. In some cases cooking meals from basic ingredients can make the food budget stretch further. As Hitchman et al. point out, “skills in shopping and cooking displayed by our low-income respondents often seemed to make the difference between a household that managed to cope well with financial constraints and one that did not” (2002, p.47). However, it may also be considered to be a negative indicator of poverty if individuals feel they have to cook

from basic ingredients rather than being able to access ready-made expensive food, as other people can do (Caraher et al. 1999). Any changes in an individual's cooking skills and the amount of food prepared need to be in the context of their social environment so that food is not prepared out of need (and therefore seen as an indicator of poverty), but rather, out of enjoyment. Cooking skills and knowledge appear to be linked to confidence in cooking. An increase in confidence and skills should increase the food options that can be prepared in the home, within the constraints imposed by the food that can be purchased.

People usually gain knowledge about food and health from a variety of sources, such as family, friends and professionals. However, often food and health advice from the media and professionals is inappropriate to people's lives because of the financial implications or lack of appreciation that eating is a culturally-based social experience (Anderson et al. 1995, p.122). People are more likely to follow advice if it is from a reliable source and can be adapted to suit their own circumstances (Dobson et al 1994). Using data from the 1993 Health and Lifestyle Survey of England, Caraher et al. (1999) found that men were likely to learn to cook through their partner's help, unlike females who were more likely to learn at a young age from their mothers. The survey also suggests that class and education are associated with the ways in which people learn to cook (Caraher et al. 1999). Females from higher social classes were more likely to place importance on cookery books to increase their knowledge, whereas cookery classes at school were more important for lower classes. In all social classes, mothers were important in transferring their cooking knowledge to their family (Caraher et al. 1999). One way in which steps have been taken to improve cooking skills and confidence has been through 'cook and eat' groups, where participants can try recipes and foods in a risk-free environment (Anderson & Morris 2000). However, the evaluation of the process of change and effectiveness of these cooking groups has been limited (Anderson & Morris 2000).

A lack of knowledge, confidence and skill in preparing and cooking foods will affect an individual's ability to consume healthy food without relying on others to prepare it or on ready-prepared foods. Research by Kilcast et al. (1996) tried to identify ways of overcoming the obstacles to increasing consumption of produce by interviewing respondents about their produce consumption habits. The research identified high and low consumers of different types of produce. Those who were identified as high consumers of vegetables had a high level of control over their household's eating patterns. The respondents often planned their meals in advance and had an experimental approach to food. The low vegetable consumers were the reverse. They had little control over what the household consumed, with most members eating different foods. The decision about the foods to be consumed was more spontaneous, with little experimentation (Kilcast et al. 1996). The research found that confidence, organisational skills, a high level of motivation and interest in food were required in order to be a high consumer of produce. There was a strong link between cooking skills and the consumption of produce. Having the knowledge and confidence to cook allowed a motivated person to prepare quick meals that were healthy. A lack of cooking skills reduced the desire to prepare foods and to experiment with different recipes and foods, leading to a diet with little variety and based on limited food choices.

The research by Kilcast et al. (1996) had a second phase where high consumer perceptions of the positive aspects of produce and its preparation were identified. The information was then translated into a brochure, with tips and advice about purchasing, preparing and consuming produce, which was then given to the low consumers. The low consumers found the brochure helped them increase their produce intake over a two-week period. The level of success within a household depended upon other members' reactions. Also, preparing produce was considered to be time-consuming, as they "had not learned the short-cut techniques of the high vegetable consumers, such as bulk preparation and storage" (Kilcast et al. 1996, pp.48-51). It is unclear whether a change in consumption patterns of the low consumers persisted as a level of skill for planning,

organising and preparing produce is necessary to maintain a high level of consumption of produce. This could be considered to be a time-consuming commitment.

The level of skill, confidence and time required to prepare and cook produce can depend on the type of produce being prepared. Analysis of data from the British Health and Lifestyle survey of 1984/85 and the follow up study in 1992 identified that if people ate fruit, they tended to eat salad as well. However, the research was unable to identify how this was linked to consumption of vegetables (Tomlinson 1998). Lambert et al. (2002) argue that items of fruit and salad are more likely to be sweet in taste and require minimal preparation, as a dessert or a snack. In contrast, vegetables can have a range of different (sometimes bitter) tastes, can require a lot of preparation and are usually eaten as part of a meal rather than as a snack. This often requires cooking facilities, skills and time for preparation. Encouraging an increase in fruit consumption may therefore require a different approach compared to that which would be used for promoting vegetable consumption. Confidence, knowledge, time and motivation are required to turn vegetables into part of a meal. Without the confidence and knowledge, the process of preparing vegetables can be daunting and seen as inconvenient. There is more of a financial and emotional risk with regard to the other household members' attitudes and responses to any experimentation to include more vegetables (compared to trying different items of fruit) (Anderson and Morris 2000).

2.4.2 The Appeal of Convenience Foods

Convenient pre-prepared food has become more popular over the last decade, in part due to the demands of time on people and the role food plays in their schedules (Marshall 1995). A Scottish qualitative study of couples with children from different economic backgrounds found that, women in particular considered pre-prepared foods an acceptable way of feeding their families. It enabled them to make cooking an achievable task combined with their other commitments. However, these convenience foods were not considered to be 'proper foods'. There was a gap between what the adults thought they should provide and meals that were realistic (Fuller 2003). The 2001 Consumer

Attitudes to Food Standards Survey revealed that, for many Scottish people, except ethnic minorities, eating produce and food preparation were of low importance (Wilkie 2001). This can lead to decisions, about whether to cook from basic ingredients or to buy ready prepared meals, being based on a combination of reasons, and not just in order to save time. In Northern Ireland, a small-scale pilot study that used questionnaires to examine food purchasing habits found that the respondents' preferences were to buy food that was convenient, with many pre-processed meals and sauces being popular regardless of the actual time respondents had available (McIlveen & Chestnutt 1999). Hitchman et al. (2002) found that the low-income respondents did not always opt for convenience food because of time restrictions but also for financial reasons. "The difference in the cost of convenience and home-made food was one of perception. Those who made their own food usually believed it was cheaper and those who bought packets and tins often believed it was cheaper than having to buy all the ingredients to make their own (Hitchman et al. 2002, p.49).

Based on individuals' preference for pre-prepared foods to save time and effort, there is a need for these meals to be healthy or for alternative healthy food not to be seen as being time consuming or difficult to prepare. Currently, individuals place more importance on foods that will keep well and are quick to prepare, rather than on their health characteristics (Maddock et al. 1999). Often healthy eating and convenient meals are seen as being in opposition to each other. While an individual may be motivated to consume a large quantity of produce, the possibility of doing this may relate to the perceived time, effort and skill involved in preparing a meal containing mostly vegetables. The perception of the difficulty and time involved in preparing produce may affect what people purchase from their CFI. Cooking with vegetables needs to be seen as convenient and not time-consuming (Kilcast et al. 1996).

2.4.3 Facilities

The motivations of users towards preparing and cooking more and varied produce will also depend on the facilities available to them. Small kitchens or other facilities which are lacking in space and/or have insufficient equipment can reduce the desire to prepare and cook food (Anderson & Cox 2000). Diets can be monotonous, as keeping a variety of food items to make meals is expensive and requires storage space. If a household lacks sufficient storage and preserving space, the quality and shelf life of the produce, as well as the quantity that can be bought will be affected. This leads to people buying fewer items of fresh food and buying them more often to avoid wastage. As a result of a lack of storage space, people may be unable to take full advantage of the CFIs, where initiatives operate on a weekly or fortnightly basis, because sufficient space to store a large quantity of produce to last that period is required. In Canada, most refrigerators are wider and larger in capacity than in Scotland. This practical element may allow for the storage of more produce than in Scotland. Having access to and using a freezer can also be an important way of storing excess food (Brennen 1997). Having different types of equipment can help in the preparation and motivation to prepare different meals. As an example, new technologies such as microwave ovens allow household members other than the home manager to cater for their food choices, as they can heat up different foods in the microwave with ease and minimal skill (Silva 2000). The skill, knowledge and frequency with which different household members prepare meals will influence the type of food purchased by the home manager. Access to facilities and equipment needs to be considered when designing any food initiative that encourages food preparation and cooking, in order to ensure that recipes and instructions can be followed with minimal difficulty and use of equipment.

2.4.4 Changes to Food Preparation

If produce can be incorporated into the household's tastes and circumstances, then it is more likely to gain acceptability as the norm. Change to the household's diet is related to the power of, and negotiation between, different household members. The influence of children on adults' food choices is often underestimated and can be substantial

(Leather 1992). One of the main barriers to increasing the consumption of vegetables is the lack of enthusiasm shown by children. Without acceptance of vegetable-based meals by children, it is unlikely that households will continue to persist with vegetable dishes (Kilcast et al. 1996). However, many parents employ different strategies to encourage their children to eat a variety of foods. Blythman believes that, if children are involved in the process of preparing the foods to be eaten, then they are more likely to eat the food (1999).

Gregory (1995) identified four different strategies that home managers implemented when adapting certain or all of the household members' food choices. One strategy was being 'isolated', where any changes were absorbed by one household member, such as one person wanting to become vegetarian or go on a weight loss diet. 'Passive consensus' involved changes imposed on household members by the home manager; sometimes substitutions were made and went unnoticed by other household members. 'Active consensus' was a situation where change was negotiated between the household, sometimes leading to new cooking and shopping arrangements, as well as the introduction of new foods. Finally, 'understated' was when there was a major disruption to the household's food choices. This major change usually took place when diets had to change because of medical circumstances. The changes involved negotiation and compromise with regard to the "complex interrelationships between an individual's food choices and those of the rest of the family" (Henson et al. 1998, p.184). The sustainability of any changes will depend on the support from the household and friends.

The simplest way to bring about change is through small, incremental steps. For instance, females are more likely than males to make small changes, such as grilling instead of frying foods (Abel et al. 1992). This type of change requires motivation but does not have to cut into a person's available time. Similarly, change involving the inclusion of unfamiliar items of produce is easiest, especially when short of time, if it can be incorporated into familiar meals and recipes. A more concerted effort to bring about change in the foods eaten may require more of a commitment, involving more

time to shop for different foods and to follow recipes and experiment with dishes. Individuals who already prepare and cook from basic ingredients with a wide variety of foods are likely to continue to do so unless there has been a change in their circumstances. Individuals who enjoy food activities or wish to eat more healthily are likely to be more willing to try to prepare and cook more foods and in a variety of ways, although they will still need the confidence and ability to do this.

2.5 Consumption

Choice, individual taste, preparation skills and the distribution of food among household members influence food consumption behaviour (Craig & Dowler 1997, p.130; Charles and Kerr 1987). The foods consumed relate largely to the foods purchased, prepared and cooked. For instance, research in Edinburgh found that low-income households with access to many shops were more likely to consume a wider variety of foods and to cook from raw ingredients than those which had more restricted access to food outlets (Brennan 1997). This section considers household and social influences on the foods eaten, such as the role of eating with others and the influence of children. It also looks at the link between eating and knowledge related to health.

2.5.1 The Availability of Produce

The presence of greater amounts of fruit and vegetables in the home is likely to result in greater consumption. An intervention to encourage people to eat more produce found that some of the low-income respondents had a problem with the cost incurred through other household members eating the extra produce they had bought as part of participating in the intervention (Anderson and Cox 2000). “An abundant supply of fruit in the home or workplace was perceived as encouraging intake. Within a cafeteria setting, it has already been demonstrated that greater amounts of fruit and salads on display increase purchases” (Jeffrey et al. 1994 cited in Anderson & Cox 2000). The other side to this is that people find it difficult to increase or maintain a sufficient intake of fruit when at friends’ homes, eating at work and other social environments where

produce is not always easily available (Cox et al. 1996). There can also be a lack of support from family and friends regarding a shift to consuming more vegetable-based dishes (Cox et al. 1996). An individual's social environment and culture of food play a large role in what is available and acceptable to consume. The easier it is to access fruit within an individual's social environment, the more likely they are to consume it.

There is also a perceived cost increase associated with increasing the amount of produce consumed. Adapting to consuming the recommended five portions of produce a day has cost and time implications that can be a barrier to those on low incomes. For instance,

“... for a person currently eating 2.5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, they are being asked to at least double their daily intake for the rest of their lives. This represents a major, sustainable change in food purchasing, dietary behaviours and taste preferences. Only highly motivated individuals are likely to take up such a challenge and most people are not so motivated...” (Lambert et al. 2002).

People on low incomes may be reluctant or unable to embark on these financial and taste preference changes, particularly if they have responsibility for the diet of others. This involvement of time and cost implies that in order to increase the consumption of produce, individuals need to perceive a benefit from the affordable produce available at the CFIs. Individuals also need to be highly motivated and confident to purchase and utilise the produce.

2.5.2 Household Expectations

Within the household, people's preferences and eating patterns will vary, with household members consuming a different variety and amount of produce. The research by Kilcast et al. (1996) suggests that levels of control over produce consumed are in some way related to whether the home manager is a high or low consumer of produce. The more motivated the home manager is, the more likely it is that the rest of the household will be presented with meals that contain a high amount of produce. It is not always clear if

the household's response leads to the home manager's lack of confidence and motivation to cook and bring about change, or whether the home manager lacks confidence in the first place. Adult attitudes to food will influence children's interests and vice versa. If a household enjoys and is interested in health issues and cooking, it is more likely that the children have been introduced to a wider variety of healthier foods from a young age, than those households without those concerns (Blythman 1999).

A main meal, usually in the evening, is still important to most households in Britain. Brennan's research, in a low-income community found that the majority of main meals still consisted of 'meat and two vegetables' (1997), although there has been an increase in the variety of foods consumed in Britain (Marshall 1995). Despite the impact of vegetarianism on changing perceptions about vegetables, they are still outside the mainstream and at the side of the plate, accompanying meat. They are not commonly perceived as a centrepiece in their own right (Marshall 1995, p.282). The contents of meals are linked to cultural and social preferences. Motivations to consume a healthy diet and more vegetables are shaped by cultural and social preferences.

The order in which food is distributed at mealtimes within the household can reflect a member's position within the household and relate to needs, age and gender. Charles and Kerr (1987) found that food formed a hierarchy based on social and cultural expectations rather than nutritional concerns. Different types of foods had different social status, with clear cultural expectations about appropriate food for men and children relating to their social status within the family (Charles and Kerr 1987). The food hierarchy also relates to the preparation, as well as to the consumption, of food. The longer a meal takes to prepare and cook the higher the status it is likely to have. Within a nuclear family, the man of the household is more likely to consume more of the higher status foods, such as the best cuts of meat. Females are more likely to eat fruit, and children are more likely to consume sweets, which are considered low status foods (Charles and Kerr 1987). A hierarchy of consumption may play a role in what the home manager chooses to cook, based on who will be consuming the meal.

2.5.3 Eating Together

Who will be present at a meal and what the occasion is will influence the food prepared, cooked and eaten (Marshall 1995). For instance, when a meal is intended for a special occasion it is likely to have more courses and take longer to prepare. Dobson et al. (1994) noted that some low-income families in the study cooked one main meal with everyone eating together in order to keep cost to a minimum and save time involved in cooking different meals. This is against the current trend where household members often eat different meals and at separate times due to their schedules and preferences. Eating separately has coincided with an increase in sales of processed children's food. Blythman finds it problematic that many adults perceive their children's taste buds to be bland and limited, therefore reinforcing the idea that children need different food compared to adults (1999). Eating together as a family can be beneficial to children in learning social skills and getting to like 'good food' (Blythman 1999, p.74). This is also dependent on the parents eating 'good food' and a balanced diet themselves. "At communal meal times children watch adults eat and the expectation is that they too, in time, will eat the same way" (Blythman 1999, p.75). Some households do not have sufficient space or facilities, such as a dining table, to eat together. Eating is a social activity, with the surroundings in which meals take place and the people involved being as important in determining which foods and how much of them are consumed as the actual foods themselves (Bell & Meiselman 1995, p.293).

2.5.4 Awareness of a Healthy Balanced Diet

Both Canadian and British governments, at different times, have promoted healthy food choices through information and education campaigns rather than strategies that recognise the barriers people face (Higgins 1992; Anderson et al. 1995). It is assumed that people will adopt healthy diets once they are aware of what constitutes healthy eating, thereby placing the onus for health on to individuals. Education is expected to improve people's knowledge and to change their attitude and behaviour towards healthy diets. The emphasis is therefore placed on individuals making behavioural changes without extensive consideration of the barriers that they may experience in changing

food choices. This approach does not require structural change to government social and environmental policies (MacRae 1997; Lang 1994).

The World Health Organisation recommends that individuals consume a minimum daily intake of 400g of produce (excluding potatoes) (WHO 1990). In Britain and Canada, this recommendation has been translated into the message that individuals should consume approximately five portions of produce a day. Canada has a “Food Guide to Healthy Eating” campaign and Britain has a “Five-a-Day” campaign, both of which promote the consumption of produce and healthy eating. In both countries, the impact of these campaigns has been difficult to measure.

One of the problems with the message about consuming five portions of produce a day is that it is not simple for individuals or professionals to conceptualise and monitor (Lambert et al. 2002). The health message presented to the public is ambiguous and complex, which means that people are unlikely to respond positively. There is the problem of knowing what constitutes a ‘portion’ or ‘serving’, as these are subject to different interpretations by different individuals and processed food manufacturers. It is also unclear what is included as a portion, such as whether it includes tinned produce, baked beans, fruit and vegetables in foods, such as a fruit yoghurt or quiche and so on. The message does not discuss the variety of produce to consume, so that it is unclear whether, for example, eating five bananas constitutes a sufficient and healthy amount of produce. Some health experts do not agree on what should be included as a portion, which leaves the public further confused (Lambert et al. 2002). Recent government information in 2001 attempted to clarify what constituted a portion (Lambert et al. 2002).

Commercial advertising also conflicts with healthy eating campaigns because it tries to entice consumers to buy products by sometimes oversimplifying healthy eating or omitting unpalatable facts, such as fat, sugar and salt levels contained in processed foods. “Optimal nutrition and health information runs up against very confusing images

of conspicuous consumption from the dominant food retail system” (TFPC 1996, p.15). Food items that are convenient, processed and high in fat dominate advertising. Commercial advertising and research reports often conflict with government healthy eating messages. In Scotland, some people distrust government advice because it is always changing (Brennan 1997). From a lay perspective, food and health information “makes sense only against the background of daily social experiences and the cultural meaning attached to health and illness” (Anderson 1995, p.125). Encouraging the food industry to produce convenient, low-cost, healthy products as alternatives to energy dense-nutrient poor foods could be beneficial to promoting healthy eating (Lambert et al. 2002).

Despite the confusing healthy eating messages people at all levels of income appear to have a degree of knowledge about what constitutes a healthy diet (Maddock et al. 1999, see Dowler 1998, p.61 for further references). There appears to be a positive attitude towards healthy eating. This would suggest that more than knowledge and interest in healthy eating are required to ensure people will consume more produce and a healthy diet (Maddock et al. 1999; Shepherd et al. 1996). For example, during an intervention at a supermarket to demonstrate the cooking of healthier foods, the sale of the food used in the demonstration increased. After the intervention, the sale of healthier food fell back to previous levels. The participants in the demonstration therefore needed more than knowledge to continue with cooking these meals (Cottee 1999). While people appear to have grasped, to varying degrees, health knowledge and advice, this does not necessarily lead to them being motivated to change their food consumption patterns.

Many individuals perceive themselves as consuming both a ‘higher than average’ amount of produce compared to other people, and a sufficient amount of produce regardless of the actual amount consumed (Cox et al. 1996). “Individuals tend to misjudge the critical features of their own diets and this can act as a barrier to dietary change. [For instance,] individuals can be overly positive about their own diets” (Woolfe 2000, p.6). It “is particularly worrying as this complacency may act as a barrier to

increasing consumption” (Cox et al. 1996, p.45). A study in Scotland found sixty percent of the sample, despite not regularly eating the recommended amount of produce, did not wish to try and change their current intake (Anderson et al 1995, p.113). Similar findings were found in a British Heart Foundation survey (Maddock et al. 1999). Motivations, other than being aware of what constitutes healthy food choices need to be considered, such as economic and physical accessibility; choice of available healthy foods; the influence of household members; personal commitment; self-discipline and self-interest; time and convenience. When people have more time and money available, they are more likely to be involved in healthy eating (Maddock et al. 1999).

‘The National Diet and Nutrition Survey: adults aged 19 to 64 years, types and quantities of food consumed’ (Henderson et al. 2002) covered all of the UK and involved interviews and the analysis of a seven-day food diary kept by each respondent. The survey found that on average, men and women consumed fewer than three (80 gram) portions of fruit or vegetables a day: 2.7 for men and 2.9 for women. For respondents who were receiving benefits this amount dropped to an average 2.1 portions for men and 1.9 portions for women. Only 13 percent of men and 15 percent of women consumed five or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day; this amount was again lower for those in receipt of benefits. A third of those receiving benefit ate no fruit over the period compared to under a fifth of the non-benefit households. Those on benefit were also likely to consume a lesser variety of fruit and vegetables. The survey did not report how much this difference, between those on and not on benefit, was related to cost or taste preferences.

2.6 Discussion

It is clear that any attempts by CFIs to encourage and enable the consumption of more produce must consider a wide range of factors rather than focusing solely on issues relating to purchasing. The whole cycle of purchasing, preparing, cooking and consuming food is important with regard to the consumption of produce. The following

key areas that need to be considered when developing the study have emerged from the literature.

The home manager, usually the female of the household, has responsibility for the majority of food tasks and is the person most likely to introduce any changes. The home manager is also most likely to be the financial planner and decision-maker about where to shop and what food is purchased. Different household members will also have a role in food choices and make different food demands and preferences that will be catered for by the home manager.

Whether purchasing, preparing or cooking food, the literature points to home managers' employing strategies to cope with the food choices that they are financially and practically able to make. People on a low income in deprived areas are less likely to own a car and more likely to experience poor shopping facilities and have access to a limited amount of produce. These barriers can make shopping stressful and often require a careful amount of planning to avoid the risk of not having adequate food for the home. Studies, such as that of Hitchman et al. (2002), highlight that much time and effort are required by individuals to implement strategies to avoid over-spending on food budgets. Despite careful planning, the choice of accessible shops and availability within these shops can still be problematic in ensuring healthy affordable food choices. Using CFIs may therefore reduce the stress of buying affordable produce. It may bring about an element of control if people are able to purchase food that they want to buy within their food budget. CFIs aim to make shopping easier and remove barriers, such as cost and availability. It is unclear how using a CFI fits into the routine of shopping for other groceries, whether it makes the situation easier or requires more of an effort, and whether shops other than CFIs are required.

Whilst using CFIs can reduce the cost of buying produce, any change to the food purchased involves a level of risk with regard to knowing what to do with the produce, and knowing whether the rest of the household are going to eat it or not. The household

members need to consume the produce, otherwise the fact that the food is good value for money counts for nothing.

Other strategies employed by home managers include different ways in which they introduce food to household members. Kilcast et al (1996) point out that, the more motivated a home manager is in trying to include produce in the household's diet, the more produce will be consumed. In addition to this, motivated home managers are likely to have more control over what their household members consume than are less motivated home managers. Home managers require skill, knowledge and confidence in order to prepare and consume different items of produce, especially vegetables. The literature suggests that any changes in the produce being consumed work best if they are incremental and fit into existing patterns of food tasks. Change is more likely in terms of consuming items of produce that require less preparation and effort, such as fruit rather than vegetables. If change is considered to be too removed from the household's normal food choices, it is unlikely to be adopted. It would be useful to know how using the CFIs leads to any changes in the food households consume, how household members react and how this relates to the home manager's actions. One would also need to know whether there is a difference in consumption between fruit and vegetables. The process of change in food choices appears to be complex, influenced by many factors. Home managers need to be motivated to benefit from any healthy eating information and need to be able to act on it. In order to do this, they need to be able to understand the information available. Practical factors, such as households' cooking equipment and facilities, can also affect the amount of produce that will be purchased and prepared from an initiative.

This study aims to consider the motivations behind the use of CFIs and the process by which any changes to food choices take place, by considering the wide range of factors that influence this process from purchasing, preparation and cooking to consumption. The literature has highlighted different studies that examine the food choices of those living on a low income and other research that involves interventions trying to introduce

changes to different households' consumption of produce. The present study intends to build on this evidence base by considering the changes to food choices of households that can occur as a result of the use of CFIs.

Chapter 3 Research Design and Methods

3.1 *The Design*

3.1.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the research aims, design and methods used in the study in order for the reader to further understand the reasons behind the design and procedures. First, the aims and the approach taken are set out, followed by the sampling strategy. Then the methods used to collect the data are discussed. Finally, part three outlines the analysis process. Throughout the study, care has been taken to ensure that the research reflects a high level of validity. This chapter aims to be explicit about the process of research and analysis undertaken so that the reader is able to interpret how sound the methods have been.

3.1.2 Background

In 1996, the Health Education Board for Scotland (now NHS Health Scotland) commissioned a report and audit of CFIs in Scotland. The report emphasised that:

Few CFIs have been subject to any formal process or outcome evaluation, rendering it impossible to assess their effectiveness. Many social and psychological benefits may accrue to volunteers and users but it is less clear whether long-term dietary or health benefits result from these initiatives (Anderson et al. 1996).

The Scottish Diet Report outlined the importance of CFIs in helping to improve the health and well being of Scotland's population, yet little in-depth research had been carried out into CFIs' ability to achieve these aims (Scottish Office 1993). In 1999, when this research project began, there was not much research and information about CFIs, and in particular the effect the initiatives had on their users' health behaviour and any financial, social or other benefits that were realised from using them.

During an exploratory case study of two CFIs, which I undertook for my MSc dissertation (Dutton 1999), it emerged that these initiatives lacked knowledge and evidence about the effect they were having on their users. The initiatives were unsure as to how they were reaching their users and whether they were meeting their aim of encouraging and enabling people to consume healthier foods through tackling the barriers they faced, such as affordability, availability and accessibility.

My initial curiosity in the study of CFIs grew from a general interest in healthy eating and a realisation, from previously living in Edinburgh without a car, that where a person lived greatly determined whether there was adequate access to produce. In addition, being from a rural area of Scotland, I was aware of and had encountered issues of access, as although we had a supermarket this did not ensure affordable fruit and vegetables of decent quality were readily available. Through this interest I was drawn to different articles about CFIs in Scotland, which led to further exploration and formed the basis for my MSc research.

Further exploration into CFIs in an international context highlighted a small number of projects with similar aims (to increase people's access to produce through community action). The reasons for choosing the project in Toronto are explained later in the chapter, but essentially it stood out as the closest fit to the Edinburgh CFI with regard to its primary aim, to increase consumption of fruit and vegetables through selling them at affordable prices in convenient locations. On initial examination, the Toronto initiative had a different design and background, reflecting the policy and national context of CFIs, which made it an interesting case to contrast with the Scottish perspective.

3.1.3 The Aims

Based on the literature review of CFIs and the MSc research, an exploratory study of the initiatives previously researched in Toronto and Edinburgh was considered, based on three sets of considerations:

- i. The lack of information available to the initiatives on how they were reaching their users.
- ii. The lack of research nationally available on CFIs in general.
- iii. Personal curiosity about the benefits the users were deriving from the initiatives.

The main aim of the study was:

to explore the process by which CFIs approach their key goal of increasing consumption of fresh produce among users, and the extent to which this goal is achieved.

The more specific objectives consisted of three areas. Firstly, the primary aim of the research was to investigate both the ways and the extent to which these initiatives made a difference to the purchasing and consumption habits of their users, in the context of their households' needs and activities. It also aimed to provide an insight into user views and experiences of the initiatives, to investigate in what ways the CFIs met their needs. The users' perspective would provide first-hand knowledge concerning the benefits and drawbacks of using the initiatives and their reasons behind using them. In order to gain an understanding of the users in the context of their lives, the whole cycle of food consumption would be considered, from purchasing, preparation and cooking to consumption.

Secondly, the study aimed to understand the projects' role in increasing people's consumption of fresh produce in the context of wider national-level developments related to CFIs, and national health, poverty and social inclusion developments. The role that government played in enabling CFIs to be effective through funding, health promotion initiatives and wider policies was also to be taken into consideration.

Lastly, it was thought that a study of the CFIs' organisational structures and processes would provide a better understanding of which factors contributed to the continuation of

the projects and how and why they functioned in the way they did. Considering the different histories and philosophies of CFIs would allow a deeper understanding of their daily processes, aims and achievements.

3.1.4 Case Study

A case study approach of the CFIs was adopted, as it offered the advantage of being broad, exploratory, flexible and adaptable to real life circumstances, as outlined by Robson,

[The] case study is a strategy for doing research, which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence (Robson 1993, 5).

A case study would allow attention to the dynamics of the situation and offer insights from detailed knowledge and understanding of a specific example (Denscombe 2002). Case studies can help to focus on changing relationships and processes through helping to unravel the links and complexities of a given situation. They are holistic in the sense that they do not seek to separate the object of study from either its context or the subjects. The value of the case study approach is that “it has the potential to deal with the subtleties and intricacies of complex social situations” (Denscombe 1998, p.35). The use of multiple sources of evidence allows for triangulation of methods to provide a way to improve the validity of any findings and assist in answering the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions that arise.

Carrying out a case study involves a lot of time and continual rather than sporadic data collection. Case studies are also open to the criticism that the findings are neither representative nor generalisable to the wider population in which they were obtained (Stoecker 1991; Rose 1991). In this instance, the case study of the two CFIs did not aim to be representative of other CFIs. The aim was not to “infer the findings from a sample to a population, but rather to engender patterns and linkages of theoretical importance”

(Yin 1989), in order to explore and develop an understanding about the effectiveness of these CFIs.

The rationale behind choosing CFIs in Toronto and Edinburgh was that I had previous research, information and contacts in place and had the opportunity to conduct further research to fully explore and develop the pertinent issues. The two initiatives had similar aims: to enable communities in low-income areas to access affordable nutritious food. Both initiatives were citywide and the largest and longest-established in their regions. The fact that they were the largest projects in their regions increased the chances of gaining access to a large number and/or a wide range of users. As both initiatives were established it meant they were more likely to have had time to evolve and work towards their aims, as well as to have had time to reflect on their experiences. While the initiatives were comparable in the time that they had been operating, they also operated in different ways, reflecting their different approaches to achieving similar aims. These different approaches reflected the typical model within their localities, the countries' different histories, and the philosophies behind CFIs, as outlined in chapter one. Both the CFIs were, therefore, typical of approaches in their region, yet extreme instances due to their being the largest initiatives in terms of number of volunteers and users, and the amount of funding they received. They both also had several projects running as part of their CFI, with the projects studied in this research being their main ones at that time.

As previously outlined, a conventional produce box scheme operated in Toronto, called the Good Food Box (GFB) project, and a produce co-op project ran in Edinburgh. While co-ops did exist in Toronto, they had different aims and were not part of the area's CFIs. Similarly, in Edinburgh there were no conventional produce box schemes operating, only organic for-profit box schemes. The initiatives offered an opportunity to conduct in-depth research into their similarities and differences and to explore patterns and commonalities in order to see how these were linked to the ways in which they reached their users. This would address the aim of understanding how the initiatives operated, in particular in relation to their users' needs.

3.1.5 Cross-National, Comparative Perspective

The two research settings provided an opportunity to study different approaches and philosophies to similar problems, as comparative research aims “to explore, interpret or explain the similarities and differences between comparable items or phenomena in different areas” (Øvretveit 1998, p.8). Social research is by its very nature a comparative exercise whereby researchers constantly compare and contrast the processes and events that they study. However, comparative research “is a specific activity, with different aims and methodological problems from research which is conducted in one setting only” (Grimshaw 1973). To take into consideration the cross-national comparative element of the research, it was important to ensure that the research in each setting would be comparable, to allow systematic analysis. As Hantrais and Mangen point out:

For the study to be cross-national and comparative, individuals or teams should set out to study particular issues or phenomena in two or more countries with the express intention of comparing their manifestations in different socio-cultural settings, using the same research instruments...to conduct new empirical work (1996, p.1).

The comparison also required an awareness and consideration of cultural differences, as cross-national research can sometimes under-estimate the impact of such differences, which can lead to misunderstandings about processes and findings (Hantrais & Mangen 1996). Hantrais and Mangen (1996, p.3) point out that, while it can be difficult to achieve an appropriate balance between flexibility and comparability, such balance can lead to fresh, interesting insights and a deeper understanding of issues that are of central concern in different countries. As Jones explains on the general concept of comparisons, they can sharpen the focus of analysis by suggesting alternative perspectives and broadening ideas as to what may be done in response to particular issues through the variety of case material that it presents (Jones 1985, p.4).

3.1.6 Households with Young Children

While many people used the two CFIs, the projects identified households consisting of children and the elderly as their main users. Although the CFIs had a significant impact on all their users, I chose to concentrate on households that contained young children between the age of 2 and 12 years old. Eating habits are often established at a young age and provide the basis of eating habits throughout life (Blythman 1999; Searle 2002, p.53). This is a crucial stage for introducing children to produce and healthy foods. The 'Towards a Healthier Scotland' White Paper (Scottish Office 1999a) emphasised the importance of encouraging children to be healthy, and considered the role of the parent in accomplishing this. It was important to capture how any changes were reflected among household members. The research also aimed to study how produce consumption patterns within households varied over time. This included how any unfamiliar items and different amounts of produce were introduced into households' diets. This would offer an opportunity to gain an insight into different household members' roles and reactions to any changes, such as seeing whether different household members consumed different types of food, as identified in the literature reviewed in chapter two.

The respondents were drawn from one and two-parent households in order to maximise the number of participants available for inclusion in the research. This also offered an opportunity to consider how different households' needs were met by the initiatives. It was possible that the initiatives met the needs of certain household structures better than others. A focus on such issues would offer insights into the initiatives by exploring users' behaviour and attitudes towards the CFIs.

3.2 Sampling Strategy

3.2.1 Access

Access to the initiatives and their operation was originally established during my MSc research, which essentially served as a feasibility study for the present investigation. Both initiatives gave consent to the continuation of my research and to the possibility of

interviewing a sample of the users of the GFB and co-op projects. Access to the initiatives also allowed my direct participation in the projects, access to their documents and to interview and work with employees and volunteers. The two projects did not keep any addresses or details about their users. As a result, the users had to be contacted through various means, as will now be explained.

3.2.2 The Sample

The GFB employees' experience of their project led them to believe that those users who ordered the box more than six times were likely to remain regular users. People ordered the boxes monthly or fortnightly, which would mean that it took a period of three to six months to become a regular user. ECFI sales and attendance records showed that the number of people attending the co-ops reduced after they had been open for several months. This led the employees, who were drawing on their experience, to conclude that a regular group of users emerge, usually after six months. Therefore both of the initiatives believed that after six months of using the projects, unless a user had a change in their circumstances, they were likely to remain a regular user, although they had no firm evidence to substantiate this.

To include the regular project users in the study would only offer an insight into their reasons for continuing with the project. In order to understand what drives a user to continue to use the project, it was considered essential to begin the study with people who were not yet termed 'regular' users. This would allow the study to capture the users who used the project for less than six-months to try to understand their reasons for doing this. This would also allow a broader understanding to be built and would help in establishing the reasons for people going from being an initial user to either being a regular user or discontinuing with the project. As the first six months were considered crucial to the continuing use of the projects, the study sample tried to reflect this. The study was to be carried out with new users over the initial six-month period, as well as the sample being part of a household with young children between 2 to 12 years old, as outlined above in the design section. The new users were people who had been using the

project for less than six months and more than two months (if less than two months they would not necessarily have much experience of using the project).

3.2.3 Income

As part of the sampling criteria, consideration was given to the possibility of focusing only on households on low incomes, as this was the CFIs' target group, even though anyone could use the initiatives. However, it was decided at the beginning of the study not to ask people about their household/personal incomes or whether they received benefit payments. As money is a sensitive issue, it was not considered appropriate to ask people about it when recruiting them, after just meeting them, especially in a public place at the co-ops or on the telephone. There was also the problem of determining if someone's income was low, as it would be relative to the person's household circumstances and could be complex to compare due to the two countries' different incomes and standards of living. There was an additional issue, particularly in Scotland, that people in all income groups do not eat enough produce, not just low-income households, so it was of interest to see the range of households with children using the projects. An alternative approach was taken, with respondents being asked about their level of income in relation to their household's needs. This meant their level of income was based on the respondents' own definition and perception of their financial situation.

3.2.4 Selecting the New Project Users

The Co-op Project

Out of the seven co-ops that operated through ECFI, three were approached and two were finally used in the study. The best way to find new users was to focus on the three newest co-ops, as I knew from my previous MSc research that the four established co-ops did not regularly gain new users. Time would have been wasted going to the established co-ops to wait around, with little guarantee of finding new users to participate in the research. Of the three newer co-ops, one had been open for over a year. Although I did try to find new users to interview from there, none fitted the criteria. The

sample was then drawn from the two other newer co-ops, as they had been operating for six months and still had a number of new users attending them.

I recruited the co-op sample and carried out the fieldwork in Edinburgh from January to June 2000. In order to find possible research participants I regularly worked as a volunteer, at the two co-ops that I was researching, over a two-month period. I then spent another month recruiting the sample. This three-month period allowed me not only to recruit research participants, but to start my participant observations in order to develop my understanding of the project. I became familiar with how the co-ops operated in order to help with developing the interview schedule and I could meet the co-op users. From this point I was able with the help of the volunteers, to speak to all the users and ask them to participate in the research if they fitted the sample inclusion criteria: of being a new co-op user with children below secondary school age. This approach offered a good way of meeting all of the new co-op users, as I could ask everyone attending the co-ops if they fitted the criteria. It was an informal environment where frequently the volunteers and users 'chatted' with each other, which meant that it was not considered unusual for me to talk to the users. I gave any possible participants a letter explaining the research (as shown in Appendix A) and a follow-up telephone call to see if they still wanted to participate and to arrange an appropriate interview time. Using this approach, I found three people who almost fitted the criteria and were therefore used to pilot the topic guide (they had either used the project for too short or long a period to fit the sample criteria). Nobody had to be excluded from the study because their children were too old; the co-ops seemed to attract households with young children. Several weeks of attendance at the co-ops allowed me to find thirteen users who fitted the criteria and eleven of those agreed to take part in the study. The two people who were not willing to take part in the study did not offer any reasons for their decision, with each of them having a friend who did participate in the study. This method of recruiting the sample encouraged people to participate, as I had the backing of the volunteers and became a familiar face at the co-ops. It also meant that I did not miss

out on any other potential respondents, as I had spoken to everyone who attended the co-ops over the three-month period that I was there.

The GFB Project

The Toronto fieldwork took place from August to December 2000. When I arrived in Toronto I had decided on interviewing users from the GFB equivalent of new co-ops, this being new drop-off sites run by volunteers. I believed this would optimise the time taken to find new users, as again new users were more likely to be located at new drop-off points rather than established stops with regular users. It also meant that I would be comparing similar experiences, concerning what it was like to be a new user who was part of a new co-op or new GFB drop-off site. This fitted with Hantrais and Morgan's recommendation that a comparative study should set out to compare particular 'manifestations' in different settings through using the same research instruments (1996, p.1). From the GFB project's list of volunteers I was able to telephone all of the volunteers who had started a drop-off point within the past six months. I told the volunteers about the study and asked firstly if they had any households with children ordering the GFB, and secondly whether they would contact them on my behalf to find out whether I could contact them about participating in my research. This way respected the users' privacy, as opposed to asking the volunteer for the users' telephone numbers and calling them. I would also know how many new users fitted the criteria but did not want to participate.

Finding a suitable sample in August was more difficult than anticipated, as this was a period when GFB orders were usually low, due to people being on holiday and organisations shutting down over the period. From initial contact with the volunteers I phoned them again or visited them to tell them more about my research and to obtain the telephone numbers of the users who had agreed to be contacted. Originally I had planned to visit the volunteers when they received their delivery of boxes, which would have allowed me to meet the users face-to-face. I believed it would have been harder for people to refuse an interview if I met them and explained the study rather than receiving

a phone call from a stranger. It would also have given me an opportunity to present, especially for those people undecided on whether to participate, a letter I had written explaining my research (see Appendix A). However, practicalities meant that it was impossible to visit all of the volunteers on their delivery days. At some drop-off sites the users could collect their box over the course of a whole day, which would have required spending the whole day at that drop-off site, unlike the co-ops, which were only open for two hours a week.

Possible participants in Toronto were contacted and arrangements made to meet with them. The majority of the new drop-off sites were organisations that worked with or housed single people and the elderly rather than households with children. Using the sample inclusion criteria there were thirteen possible participants. Again, while some households included older children as well as younger children, no household only had older children. Two of the potential respondents did not wish to participate in the study and were never contacted. The reasons given by the volunteers were that one person was too busy and the other had moved house and had stopped using the project. Of the remaining eleven possible respondents, ten took part in the research. The other person was busy and it became impossible to arrange a date for an interview, so she was eventually omitted. More drop-off sites existed than co-ops, with fewer users per stop than at the co-ops, which made it more difficult to recruit possible GFB respondents. In both Edinburgh and Toronto, it took a month to recruit the samples.

3.2.5 The Sample Size

I aimed to obtain a hundred percent sample of all users meeting the inclusion criteria, as outlined above. The initial aim was to recruit a sample of between twelve and fifteen respondents in each location. This number was deemed large enough to give an insight into what it was like to use the projects and would provide a decent amount of data to analyse within the given time-scale and available resources. It would also allow enough responses if some people did not continue with the study. In reality, I could not find more than eleven respondents from the co-op project and ten from the GFB project. To

find more potential respondents would have required a longer period of recruitment than I had available. The respondents provided a good cross-section of the people starting the projects at that period of time, as I could not locate anyone else and the refusal rate was low. The employees from both projects also felt the cross-section and number of respondents recruited was representative of the criteria and as they would have expected.

3.2.6 Non-Participants

In order to compare and contrast the difference in attitudes and practical factors between participants and non-participants, the ideal would be to know why people do not enter or use the projects and why some people do not return to use the projects for more than a couple of times. The lack of coverage of the opinions on the impact of the projects on non-participants and previous users was given close consideration in the initial stages of the study, but it was difficult to locate non-participants and those that stopped using them early on. Finding people who did not participate would have involved a lot of extra time, as there were no community groups in the area that offered a way to meet a large number of non-participants at one time, thereby leaving the option of going around the area knocking on people's doors in Edinburgh and limited options in Toronto.

3.3 *Methods of Collecting Data*

Related to the research aims and sample, a variety of research methods were used to obtain a broad picture of the ways the CFIs approached their goal of increasing the consumption of produce among users, and the extent to which this goal was achieved. The methods involved participation and observation, documentary analysis and interviews with employees and volunteers. The main part of the study involved interviews held with the project users in the form of two panel studies (one in Edinburgh, one in Toronto) to compare the two different types of CFIs. Care was taken to ensure respondents were comparable between the two projects and representative of households with young children. The panel study method allowed for data to be collected from the same individuals at different points in time. Firstly, time was spent in

Scotland carrying out the fieldwork, followed with five months in Toronto. Triangulation involving the use of different sources of evidence and methods of collecting data allowed a broad range of data to be collected and contrasted with each other to assist in clarifying and adding validity to the research, as Robson highlights:

If two sources give the same message then, to some extent, they cross validate each other. If there is a discrepancy, its investigation may help in explaining the phenomenon of interest (1993, p.383).

3.3.1 Documentary Sources

The documents allowed an insight into the projects' structures, processes and future plans. Although the projects started around the same time, the Toronto initiative appeared to produce more documents and made its work and aims more explicit than the Edinburgh initiative. Overall, the documents varied from strategic statements, previous evaluations and newsletters, to minutes and administrative correspondence. The documents were collected through my requests, employees' recommendations and reading documents and memos that were circulating around the initiatives' offices when I was visiting them. These documents assisted in addressing the research aims by identifying the initiatives' past, present and future plans. The documents could be used as cross-references to observations and interviews. They highlighted the projects' aims and provided the context in which they operated. As with all evidence, I needed to question why the documents were produced, who wrote them, their validity and relevance (Miles & Huberman 1994). For instance, an evaluation of a food co-op that was written to support an application for funding greatly over-estimated the number of regular users it had and the number of households it was reaching. Through visiting the co-op on several occasions it became apparent that it had fewer users than it purported to have.

3.3.2 Discussion with Management, Employees and Volunteers

I had previously interviewed the majority of employees, including management and volunteers, for my MSc research, so I discussed issues with them while I was in the office, asking them for information as questions arose rather than re-interviewing them. During the MSc research, the interviews covered respondents' roles in the projects and what work they undertook. During this study I shared my work with employees, and they reciprocated by informing me about their work. Occasionally, I was asked for feedback on items that I had covered that related to the employees' work. The feedback sessions were invaluable two-way processes for developing and sharing ideas and seeing issues from different perspectives. Often I was asked not only about my research, but also about the other initiative under study and the broader picture of what was happening in that country. This helped me gain an alternative perspective on both initiatives, as someone would always ask a question or make a comment that I had not thought about or had taken for granted. I felt less of an outsider and more involved in what was going on and importantly, I was more aware of what was happening than would have been the case if I had only carried out one-way interviews with the employees. I had discussions with as many people as possible based on their role. The format, frequency and length of any discussions varied.

I was able to talk with the volunteers while participating at the projects. In Edinburgh, I could talk with the volunteers while at the co-ops. In Toronto, I spoke with the drop-off site volunteers either through going to their stop or on the telephone. While in Toronto, research about the volunteers was completed by another researcher, which meant I could use their data. I contacted the volunteers at the end of each interview period in order to see what had happened and whether there had been any problems, to help place the interviews with the users in context.

3.3.3 Participation and Observation

Five months were spent within each initiative in order to gain a thorough understanding of the daily processes and problems that arose. I attended the office in Toronto more

than in Edinburgh, as I had an assigned workspace in the Toronto office; I did not have this arrangement in Edinburgh. In both projects, informal chat about the initiatives flowed. The encouragement of volunteers at the initiatives allowed me to integrate into the project. 'Persistent' observation of specific situations, can enhance the credibility and thereby the validity of any findings, as it offers an opportunity to "identify those aspects of a situation that are most relevant to the issues involved and to focus on them" (Robson 1993, p.404). Through my participation, I was able to gain a clearer insight and draw on observations that might have not been possible, had I remained a distant observer. I took up opportunities as they arose while allowing for a variety of situations. This was an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of how the initiatives really worked in terms of their structure and daily dynamics. I could relate observations to any interviews and documents read, thus helping to provide more perspectives and the opportunity to cross-refer and validate some of the findings (Robson 1993).

Certain aspects became clearer as a result of active involvement. A sense of atmosphere was gained that could not be found in any documents. It allowed an insight into the changes on a weekly basis and the reason or practicality behind some decisions that had left the user respondents confused. For instance, many respondents were annoyed when the co-op opened late one week due to late delivery of the stock, which they blamed on employees' incompetence, whereas I knew about the problems occurring with the produce suppliers. Seeing both sides helped to highlight problems of communication between employees, volunteers and users, which was something I could then explore further with the users and employees. I actively tried to remain open-minded and not assume that I knew the answers, in order to elicit different views and be aware of my own biases, while considering the influence of my presence and choice of location, as recommended by Denscombe (2002).

My participation was enjoyable and aided by being accepted as a familiar face around the projects from my MSc fieldwork, although some of the employees and volunteers had changed. I was able to talk with most of the employees and volunteers in a more

natural environment, compared to the more formal interviewer-interviewee relationship. However, as Silverman (1993, p.208) points out there is a danger in being overly content about the status of 'naturally-occurring' data. There is no 'pure' data; as all data is mediated by one's own reasoning, as well as that of the participants (Silverman 1993, p.208). Participating and being present at the projects was time-consuming but rewarding on both a research and personal level. It offered an opportunity to enquire about subjects and issues that might not have come out in an interview because they were considered unimportant or mundane. I tried to avoid making conversations seem like interviews even though sometimes the aim was to find out specific information.

I was also aware that as a researcher doing routine things I needed to adapt my instinct and actions and switch from using common sense to that of the critic. As Denscombe points out, "Social researchers need to suspend common-sense beliefs about 'the subject' they chose to investigate and then question the obvious, taking nothing for granted" (2002, 170). This approach was easier to implement at the start of a new experience where I would instinctively want to know more about the situation. The challenge was to try and keep a critical mind over the whole period, particularly when the situation became familiar, such as participating in the co-op every week and helping with the packing of the boxes in Toronto every Tuesday.

I wrote up notes when information was not clear and needed to be cross-referenced or appeared important, which was especially helpful with developing thoughts on an issue. These notes often led to more questions than answers. Sometimes I would ask these questions or suggest any ideas that were forming in my mind to people at the projects for further information or to develop ideas. My participation included attending meetings and events, going out on deliveries and helping in the warehouses. Some of these activities provided information directly related to the research, while other activities widened my understanding of the whole initiative rather than the specific part I was looking at.

In Toronto, I regularly helped out as a volunteer to pack the boxes and in Edinburgh I helped out at the co-ops. Like the other GFB packing volunteers, I received a free box for participating and I often bought produce from the co-ops. Having the produce from the projects had a larger influence on me than I had expected. From the outset I just saw receiving the box as a way to avoid the need to go to the supermarket on my way home from carrying out my research. While I already ate what I thought was a sufficient amount of produce I found myself eating a lot more produce and trying different meals. Receiving the box full of produce to utilise with the two other people I lived with in Toronto gave me the experience of being a new user and led to a lot of questions about the practical issues of receiving and utilising it. It also gave me an awareness of what produce was in the box and the newsletters' contents during the interview periods, which helped to understand what the respondents were sometimes talking about. Like the respondents, I experienced dealing with produce that I had never prepared before. I wondered more about what other new users did with unfamiliar items, whether they used the newsletter recipes and what they did to avoid wastage. The people with whom I lived were good at consuming the produce, liked trying foods and recipes but were not good at preparing it, which soon became my role. This led to issues around how motivated and skilled somebody had to be to utilise all of the produce. It also raised the question as to what benefits were seen to derive from buying the box. In our flat, it meant we always had produce available and somehow we adapted to eating more meals together, perhaps as the produce was there and easily turned into a large meal for everyone. Cultural differences were also more apparent with receiving the box. For example, we received leeks in one of the boxes, which a flatmate had not seen before. This was surprising, as it was a staple in Scottish soups and meals. This led to a discussion in the office and it came to light that many users had complained about it being in their boxes, as they did not know what to do with it. I also experienced unfamiliar items, such as squash, pumpkin and persimmons. This reinforced the need to be aware of cultural differences, especially when interviewing the users.

Similarly, when using the co-ops, although I had a choice of what to buy, because I found unusual items to be more affordable than elsewhere I would regularly buy them. This meant I was preparing and consuming more unusual or expensive items of produce more frequently, such as aubergines and sweet potatoes. Being at both projects gave a different insight into how the projects operated. This new way of obtaining produce and different culinary experience led to questions about what other people gained from using the projects and what were their experiences, especially when preparing foods for others. It helped when developing the topic guides and carrying out the interviews, as I was more aware of what they were talking about, especially for example, if they were referring to an unfamiliar item of produce that was on sale or in the box one week. It also led to a change in the frequency with which I used food shops and influenced what I bought from them.

3.3.4 Interviewing the Project Users

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the user respondents were chosen to explore their behaviour and attitudes in relation to their local CFI to ascertain the appeal and benefits of the projects. The panel studies took the form of two interviews with each of the respondents to enable coverage of the initial crucial settling-in six-month period. The first interview was to be carried out as near as possible to the third month of the respondents using the project and the second interview at three months after the first. The respondents were not interviewed as soon as they started using their local project as they would not be able to say much about the actual project, only their use of other shopping facilities. At three months, the respondents could give a retrospective view of their initial use of the project up to the present (from start to three months) as well as being able to compare the experience with other shopping facilities. In reality, in order to maximise the sample within the limited time scale, respondents were selected who had been using the projects for between two and four months at the time of their initial interview. The second interview acted as a means of identifying what changes had occurred (from three to six months) and to expand upon and cross-reference comments

from the first interview to build up a better picture of the respondents' behaviour. The second interview also clarified information relating to the first interview.

Alternative methods were originally considered to capture any changes in the consumption of produce. However, research that accurately measures consumption, such as food diaries, can be time consuming and intrusive (Anderson 1995). The logistics and time required of the researcher are also very demanding: for instance working out how to measure all of the food a household has consumed when they are all likely to eat different foods. It was decided that it was more important to gain the perspective of the respondent, as I was looking at the acceptability of the project and its produce and the process of change, rather than exact nutritional intake.

3.3.5 Topic Guides

To carry out the semi-structured interviews an interview guide was devised consisting of a set of topics that were common to all interviews, with variations according to context. The guides are included in Appendix B. The variations took into consideration whether it was the first or second interview and which project the respondent used. This way the guides were comparable across both countries, while allowing differences between users, the projects and country. The guides were constructed from relevant literature and through experience of being at the projects. The guides comprised of topics to be covered in the interviews rather than set questions. The order in which the topics were covered depended on the direction the interviewee was going. It was hoped this would make the flow of conversation more logical to the respondents' responses. I would use prompts, come back to issues or direct the conversation if it was veering away from the interview areas of interest. Care was needed to avoid asking leading questions and to make sure the language used was appropriate, especially as people in Toronto were not necessarily familiar with my Scottish accent.

All the topic guides covered the same five areas. Firstly, there was a section to gather general details about the respondents and their life circumstances, such as who lived in

the household. The second section covered issues related to purchasing food, including the use of their local project. Then there was a section covering food preparation and cooking, followed by eating patterns and finally a section about their attitudes and perspective on their local project. The topic guides between the first and second interviews differed, in order to gain an idea of the changes that had occurred in the respondents' behaviour and attitudes towards the projects and healthy eating. The topic guides also differed within the same sections between the two countries to reflect relevant differences between the projects.

The first topic guide was piloted on three co-op users who almost fitted the sampling criteria. These interviews were beneficial in allowing me to practise my interview technique and build my confidence in carrying out the interviews. They provided good insights on where to make changes in the guide and how the information obtained was relevant to the aims of the study. In Toronto, one pilot interview was carried out, as at this stage I was confident enough to start the main study interviews.

From the pilot interviews it was clear that certain points needed to be covered in different ways to address issues of validity and concerns about obtaining a true picture rather than responses that reflected what the respondents thought I wanted to hear. Denscombe points out that the validity can be increased through a comparison of findings from similar questions asked in different ways. If the responses are similar or reveal the same information this supports the idea that the response is valid (assessment of honesty) (2002, p.102). When responses differed, this necessitated further questions being tailored, to ascertain the reasoning behind the variation. For example, the interviews tried to explore how much produce the respondents and their household consumed and how this amount changed over the interview period. Comparing the portions of fruit and/or vegetables consumed by a respondent over a period of time was more useful than comparing between respondents, due to the fact that there was an element of subjectivity involved when they were quantifying how much produce they consumed. Asking people how many portions of produce they ate could result in

respondents giving a high number as an ideal or just over-estimating the amount eaten. Other questions were therefore also asked to obtain a broader picture of how much produce was eaten; such as what meals and snacks were eaten throughout the day, what meal was consumed the evening before the interview and how typical this meal was. These questions all contributed to providing an indication of the amount of produce eaten on average. Using probing questions provided further detail, which helped clarify responses, and assisted with validity by providing in-depth information and explanations for responses.

3.3.6 Carrying Out the Interviews

Once respondents' phone numbers were obtained, either through the volunteers passing on the numbers in Toronto or by approaching people at the co-ops, I would call them and explain the research and confirm that they still wanted to participate. Fortunately, the people I contacted were all willing to be interviewed so a date and time were arranged.

When recruiting the users I was aware that I had the support and advice of the projects and relied on the volunteers to be positive gatekeepers. When carrying out the research I had to consider how the role of the gatekeepers might affect the respondents' answers. At the beginning of each set of interviews I would again explain the purpose of the research and made sure the respondents knew what they said would be treated as confidential and that I was independent of the projects. In order to reduce any possible bias in the responses, I also emphasised that I was studying the projects and how they operated rather than making any judgement about them and their household's food habits.

The interviews were carried out in the respondents' homes. This was convenient for the respondents and ensured a familiar environment for them while taking part in an unnatural situation of being interviewed. The aim was to make the format of the interview informal and flexible. Each respondent allowed the interviews to be taped and

at their request the tape was stopped at any time. Interviews lasted between 40-60 minutes and were completed within the planned time frame, with all respondents allowing the interviews to be taped.

Carrying out the interviews was sometimes straightforward, while at other times it was difficult to arrange and to locate the respondent. It became routine to call the respondents before setting off to their homes. Most of the respondents had busy lives, especially with their children's activities. Frequently, respondents had unexpected commitments or they had forgotten about the interview, so it had to be rescheduled. The positive side of the interviews not being seen as important to the respondents, in relation to their other daily activities, was the fact that they had forgotten that I was coming back to interview them for a second time. This meant that I did not feel that I had a large effect on the respondents' knowing that I would interview them again. Therefore they did not make an effort to eat more produce or continue to use their local project because they knew they would be interviewed at a later stage about these issues. As a gesture of recognition of their time to participate, all the respondents at the end of the second interview received a small gift for participating in the study.

Attrition rates for the second interviews were low, being one person from each project, although both these individuals allowed me to interview them briefly by telephone. One person had not used the project since I had interviewed her so she did not think she had anything different to tell me. Another person was still using the project with no problems, but did not want to take part in another interview.

3.3.7 Using the Topic Guide

I became aware that for the second set of interviews in Toronto I needed to introduce a different way of talking about cooking styles and the regular meals that households ate. This area was covered in all of the first interviews in Edinburgh and Toronto. However, in Edinburgh there was little ethnic variation amongst the respondents. When the respondents talked about cooking and the meals they made I felt I understood what they

were describing as the meals sounded familiar. If I did not know, I would enquire further. Either I was assuming I knew what they were talking about (through shared culture) or we did share an idea about what these meals were. For instance, respondents had a lot of pasta bakes and meals, such as spaghetti bolognese. I found that covering the same topic in Toronto at the first interviews left me confused about the cooking style and what meals consisted of, even though I had tried to enquire further. The respondents were from many different ethnic backgrounds compared to the Scottish sample. Yet, when asked about the meals they prepared they often replied in a way that implied I should know what they were meaning, such as baked chicken and rice. It turned out that there was a lot of variation in how this was prepared, with some households breading the chicken, others covering it in plum sauce and so on, demonstrating different cooking preferences and skills. Therefore, at the second interview in Toronto I changed the discussion to ask how they would describe their cooking style and influences upon their choice of food, and what this involved, such as a Jamaican and Canadian upbringing. This revealed ethnic differences, and different approaches to food and cooking skills, confidence and motivation. I wished that I had taken the same approach in Edinburgh to see if more detail was possible.

The second interviews proved to be invaluable. Most of the respondents were more at ease and more frequently gave open responses without needing the same amount of prompting as previously. It was a strange situation where, after only meeting someone for the hour previously at the last interview, I was no longer treated as a complete stranger. For instance, with one respondent the first interview was set rather formally, with us both sitting at the table in the living room, seeming to reflect that I was a stranger coming into her home, with an interview being an unusual situation to her. The second interview was completely different with the respondent being more open and talkative, even before and after the interview. The interview was also for various reasons conducted with both of us sitting on the respondent's kitchen floor.

Before going to carry out the second interview I would re-read the respondent's first interview and take note of any points I wanted to cover again or information that was missing. This formed what Silverman refers to as a contact summary sheet consisting of what most stood out, new insights suggested by the contact and what to concentrate on next time (2000, p.84). At the end of the interviews I would ask the respondents if they had any questions or sometimes throughout the interview respondents would ask me questions. During the interview I would try to avoid giving my opinion on a subject and often came back to questions and points at the end of the interview, such as answering queries about the running of the project, in order to try and avoid influencing any responses.

Some respondents were open about the issues around food, while others were more closed and sensitive to the factors involved in purchasing food. It was clear that for some respondents food was just an everyday necessity, which they had not really thought about, while others had previously thought about issues around the politics of food and using the projects.

3.3.8 The Timing of the Interviews

The interviews were carried out to ensure that each respondent was interviewed at a cold and a warm time of year, as the type and amount of produce consumed is sometimes related to the seasons. This meant carrying out the interviews in February and May/June in Edinburgh and September and December in Toronto. I was under pressure to fit in all of the Toronto second interviews before mid-December, as it would have been difficult to interview people over the holiday period. This in turn put pressure on me to complete the first set of interviews in time for three months to pass and to be no later than mid-December. Ideally, the interviews would have been carried out at the same time of year to aid the comparison, but practically this was not possible. In Scotland, the seasons made a difference to not only the food eaten but also the type of meals so that more salads were eaten in summer and more soup in winter. In Toronto, the respondents ate similar meals throughout the year, with salad eaten all year round.

3.3.9 A Second Person

I had planned to have shorter, more strategic, interviews with the partners of the respondents who used the projects, in order to give an added dimension to the research. This would have allowed a broader insight into the household context of food choices and consumption habits. It would have give a perspective on how food decisions were made and what interactions took place in the private setting of the home. In reality it was just not possible to interview the partners, as they were either not interested or not available to participate, for different personal reasons, such as their work commitments and food activities not being something they were involved in.

All but one of the respondents were women. One husband did participate in the interviews along with his wife as they both wanted to be involved; the husband was interested in community and farming issues, while the wife was interested in food activities of purchasing, preparing and cooking.

3.3.10 Ethics

Care was taken when carrying out the interviews to treat the respondents with respect and to ensure they did not feel pressured into taking part. I explained that the purpose of the research was to look at how the projects operated in relation to their users, rather than making any judgements about their households' food habits. Respondents gave their consent to the interviews being taped for transcribing, the transcripts would only be seen by my supervisors and me. They were aware that the tape could be stopped at any time to avoid any stressful situations. The tape was stopped once for a respondent who wanted one response erased, once this was done she was happy to continue with the interview. The response she gave named her children, which she did not want. I was happy to do this to avoid any undue intrusion. As agreed the interviews were kept confidential, as only I listened to the tapes and saw the full transcripts. Care was taken when transcribing and using quotes, to use pseudonyms for any names given. Ages of children and any other personal details that could be related to particular respondents were changed in order to maintain anonymity.

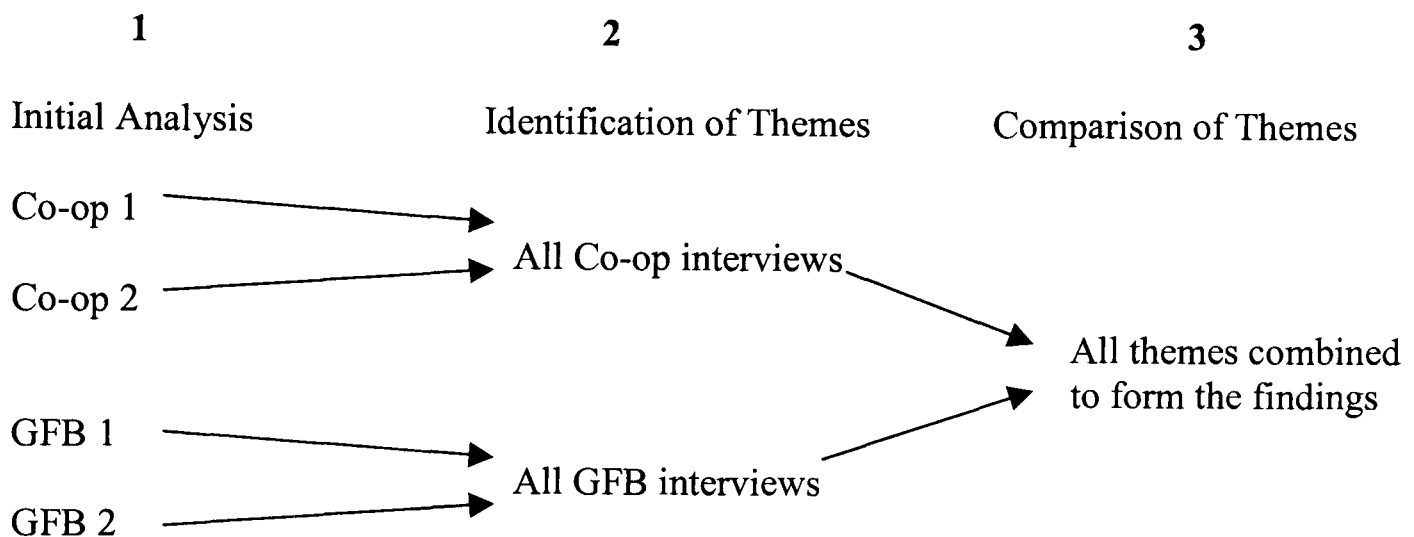
The maintaining of confidentiality was also important in regard to any conversations held with volunteers and employees when participating in the initiatives or interviewing anyone else and when reading certain documents. Care was taken when feeding back issues to the initiatives and when referencing/quoting people to ensure that I was still maintaining confidentiality.

3.4 The Analysis Process

As recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994), I took notes while carrying out the fieldwork and used these to reflect on the course that the research was taking. This helped me to stay focused and see what was relevant in order to save time in the long term. Documents and literature were read throughout the research period and aided the development of issues and ideas, as well as being used during the write-up period of the research. Feedback sessions with some employees at the projects were invaluable in developing and grounding my work. All these forms of data gathering and analysis added context and understanding to the main focus of the research and analysis, namely the respondent project user interviews.

To carry out the analysis of the interviews, texts by Denscombe (2002), Lofland & Lofland (1995), Strauss & Corbin (1998), and Silverman (2000) were most influential in the approach I used. A grounded theory approach was not the principal method used to gather evidence. However, some of its techniques influenced the analysis. The analysis followed three phases, as is outlined in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Phases of the Analysis Process of the Respondent Interviews



3.4.1 Phase 1: Analysis of the Project User Interviews

During the Fieldwork

The analysis process for the interviews began during the initial fieldwork period. The purpose of this phase of the analysis was to attempt to identify “patterns and processes, commonalties and differences” (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.9). The commonalties and differences assisted in looking for statements of relationships, which together constitute a framework that can be used to explain phenomena (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p.15). In relation to the user interviews the analysis was split into four sections, with each section corresponding to a set of interviews. The first set was the initial interviews in Edinburgh, the second was the second set of interviews in Edinburgh, with the third and fourth being the first and second set of interviews in Toronto. Each interview was transcribed in between carrying out the interviews within each set. Personally transcribing the forty interviews enabled me to see areas of interest or omissions to follow up in the next set of interviews with the respondents and increased my awareness of the responses provided. Transcribing was surprisingly more difficult for some Scottish interviews than the

Canadian ones, due to the speed and dialect of the respondents. People spoke quickly with many colloquial expressions, perhaps because they assumed that, being Scottish, I would understand them.

The Four Summary Papers

Each of the papers was prepared in order to summarise what had emerged from each set of interviews so that when I had completed the fieldwork I would have a rough overview of the research to date. This would take away the daunting task of dealing with such a large quantity of data after the fieldwork was complete. The summaries were also used to inform some of the next stages of fieldwork. The summary of the first set of interviews informed and assisted the development of the topic guide for the second set of interviews in Edinburgh, and then these two summaries helped to inform the interviews in Toronto. The summary papers also formed part of the feedback sessions held with employees of the projects. After completing the interviews I had forty transcribed interviews, and four summary papers containing the first stage of my analysis.

In order to write up the summary of each of the four sets of interviews I went through the transcripts (between nine to eleven interviews within each set) line by line, assigning codes at the side of the text when it appeared to be of relevance. This involved asking questions about the data, to grasp what was being said. Examples of what gave rise to the line of questioning are:

- Of what category is the item before me an instance?
- What can we think of this as being about?
- What question about a topic does this item of data suggest?
- What sort of answer does this item of data suggest (propositions suggested)?
- What is it? What does it represent?
- And simply, what is going on here? (Lofland & Lofland 1995. Chp.6)

The aim of identifying codes was to begin to move beyond describing the situation to explaining the why, when, where, what and how events were occurring (Strauss & Corbin 1998). The codes were designated according to the word(s) that summed up the essence of what the person was conveying. From reading the transcripts certain themes became apparent and were used to categorise the codes into three groups. The groups were motivations 'm' for the food purchased, factors 'f' that influenced the food consumed and change 'c' that was experienced from using the projects. For example, with the first set of Edinburgh transcripts, some codes were related to the respondents' 'motivations' to shop and were assigned 'm' and then a word relating to that motivation so there was 'm-family' for family influences when shopping. Most of these codes highlighted descriptive events and instances, such as 'm-cost', which represented the motivation of cost in what food was purchased. Denscombe points out that the first set of codes are usually, "fairly descriptive and are likely to involve chunks of data in terms of their content" (2002, p.120). Some codes moved beyond description, such as 'm-choice', which not only included comments about choice made by the respondents but also included quotes that I believed were indirectly related to and influenced the choice the respondents experienced when purchasing food but were perhaps not identified by the respondents themselves. By the end of this process most of the text had at least one code assigned to it.

The codes of the first interviewee's transcription were used on the next interview with new codes being added where it was considered necessary. Some codes were refined, adapted or widened as required. If a code became too broad and contained too much information it could be divided; for instance into positive and negative aspects of the code, or into the difference between the shops and the projects. As an example, the code 'm-service' contained all the assigned data related to the atmosphere and service experienced when shopping. This code had a lot of data and differences within it emerging between using certain shops and the co-op, which led to the code being split into 'm-co-op-service', 'm-supermarkets-service' and 'm-small shops-service'. There

were around 25 – 35 codes for each set of interviews, with an example of the codes listed in Appendix C.

The coding process and analysis were aided through the use of the Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) Ethnograph and NUDIST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data. Indexing, Searching, Theorising). The programmes were used as an aid to manage the large amount of data from the interviews. All the transcripts could be stored on the programme's database and I could then assign codes to the text to aid my analysis process. I had previously used Ethnograph and continued to do so in Edinburgh. When in Toronto, the only programme available was NUDIST, which necessitated that I use it.

The first two interviews in each set were coded, by writing the codes in pencil as the names assigned to codes could be quickly adapted until I was satisfied with the name and felt that it could be applied to more than one interview. After loading the interviews onto the software package, I went through the interviews. The first two interviews of each set were given the codes already assigned (with adjustments where necessary) and the rest of the interviews were coded on the screen assigning the same codes as the other interviews and creating new ones where required.

The software packages allowed the text to be assigned more than one code, so if I was unsure which code a piece of text represented or felt the text fitted more than one code, it was assigned to more than one code. This was useful, as some responses contained instances of more than one code. For example, health and cost factors were often mixed up as respondents talked about how they balanced purchasing some types of healthy food with the cost involved.

The advantage of using the software packages was that the interviews could be easily stored and quickly coded once I was aware of what codes were to be used. Also, the packages were flexible so that not only could I assign more than one code but also I

could delete and reassign codes where necessary, which meant I did not feel under any pressure about the initial choice of codes, as they could be changed. I could reflect on the choice of codes and make changes where and when I thought appropriate.

The software packages allowed the retrieval of codes on to the screen in order to see all of the parts of the interviews selected under each code. This information was collated for each separate code and printed out, as it was easier to read and see all of the responses on paper than on the screen. This allowed for examination of each code to see if there were any patterns of similarities, differences, and any different groups of responses or thoughts emerging. It helped to decide whether any codes needed to be merged (as they linked with other codes and did not contain enough data in them), split (they contained too much data with too many different things going on within the code) or deleted. It was important while doing this to remember to keep the contents of the information in a code within the context of the interview that it was taken from.

The process of coding continued until all of the interviews of that set were fully coded. During this process any thoughts about what was emerging from this process were jotted down and kept separate from the codes, to be looked at during analysis of the codes. These notes are often called memos and are identified by Descombe (2002) as serving two purposes: firstly as a reminder of new thoughts about the investigation and secondly to act as a log of the developing line of thought processes. The codes were assigned to the different categories that emerged; these included motivations held, factors of influence, such as practicalities and household preferences, changes that had occurred, and an 'other' section that contained text of interest but did not clearly fit in to the other sections. The aim was to look for ideas or events that looked significant to the research aims, with a realisation that at the beginning the choice of codes and categories was not crucial and could be based on respondents' categories or personal 'hunches' to guide the process. The next stage of refinement and improvement was when it became more important to consider the assignment of codes (Denscombe 2002, p.271). The data that initially looked important influenced the creation and naming of these different code

headings and sections within these headings. The aim was to have an open mind (but not a blank one) about the creation of codes. “It avoids using previous theories and concepts to make sense of the data and thus is open to discovering new factors and relevance to an explanation of that area” (Denscombe 2002, p.111).

After considering what the content of each code was implying, the next stage was to compare the codes and see if any patterns emerged between them or linked them together. ‘m-choice’, ‘m-cost’ and ‘m-convenience’ all linked together and influenced each other in different ways. For instance, in some cases, when convenience was important the choice of food purchased would be limited and costs would increase. These differences could then be explored further at a later stage when more time was available. “By comparing each coded instance with others that have been similarly coded, even using hypothetical possibilities, the researcher is able to refine and improve the explanatory power of the concepts and theories generated from the data” (Denscombe 2002, p.120). The notes from this process, in addition to notes made while analysing the codes, formed the basis for a summary of the emerging issues, with the structure of the summary reflecting the linkages between the codes. At this stage most of the codes were descriptive rather than analytical. This reflected the fact that I was just learning to deal with the large amount of information gathered from the interviews and I had a limited time to complete the task in order to be ready to undertake the next set of interviews and start the process again. I also did not want to develop the summary too far until all the data had been collected.

Each summary was discussed with my supervisors and project employees. Their feedback was invaluable in raising issues from the summaries and points of interest to think about developing further when carrying out the other interviews and analysis of them. Robson (1993, p.404) comments that the exercise of being explicit in formulating something for presentation to a peer fosters subsequent credibility and can assist with the analysis process. “Exposing one’s analysis and conclusions to a colleague or other peer

on a continuous basis can assist in the development of both the design and analysis of the study” (Robson 1993, p.404).

3.4.2 Phase 2 After Completing the Fieldwork: Each Projects’ Themes

At the end of the fieldwork, the four summaries of the issues arising from the interviews were used to highlight ideas and points that had emerged. To take the analysis of the interviews further I returned to the transcripts. To enable assimilation of the large amount of data the transcripts were split up, all of the Edinburgh interviews being examined first, followed by all of the Toronto interviews. This gave the opportunity to explore the changes that had taken place over the period of six months for each respondent and project.

Each respondent’s transcripts were re-coded together to provide a picture over the whole six-month period. Again the software package NUDIST was used, this time for all of the interviews, as an efficient way to manage and retrieve the codes that I assigned. NUDIST allowed the code names to be arranged into a hierarchy tree formation with different branches further splitting into more branches. For instance, one branch consisted of all codes related to ‘motivations’ (m) and from this there were sub-branches related to motivation such as m-cost, m-health, m-family and so on, which were sometimes further split, such as whether the code related to the initiative, supermarkets or other shops. This assisted in thinking about how some codes linked to each other and how some codes could be arranged under a category and certain headings.

The interviews were re-coded using a similar process to that previously discussed, only on this occasion the codes became less descriptive and more analytical where possible, reflecting the fact that I was more immersed in the data and could begin to see linkages between the interviews. The codes and transcriptions were often revisited as part of the analysis process, each time aiming to refine the findings. Again patterns within and between the codes were looked for in order to identify links and associations. Codes could then be adapted, if necessary, and these links and associations could be subsumed

under broader categories; some codes would emerge as more important than others. This was a drawn out process and on many occasions it was unclear as to how to progress. In these instances, referring to the literature on analysis helped clarify the process.

Similarities and differences emerging from the codes were highlighted, with attention given to extreme and exceptional examples to help to understand the dimensions of each pattern. For instance, when looking at all of the codes related to cooking I initially had the code 'respondent & cooking', which contained too much information and was too large. Looking through the code I began to split it up into;

- 'approach' (did they experiment, use recipes),
- 'new' (did they try new foods/meals),
- 'confidence' (to cook in general),
- 'produce' (how often was produce prepared / consumed),
- 'enjoyment' (of cooking),
- 'project' (any difference in cooking due to project)
- 'other' (anything else of interest).

Splitting up the code enabled me to form a grid of the responses. The grid had the respondents down the first column and across the top all of the above codes with a word or phrase for each respondent being placed in the correct grid square. Forming this grid was not a conscious decision but it seemed appropriate once I started to split the code up and scribble down notes about what seemed to be present in each code. From the grid I could see if there were any patterns within a code (by looking down the column) or between codes (by looking across codes by each respondent or by complete codes). This method allowed linkages to emerge within the grid. There appeared to be links between, for example, levels of confidence and whether the respondents prepared and experimented with produce from the project. Patterns emerged, with respondents forming groups around those who were confident to cook and those who were not. The next stage was to bring in other codes - not from the original 'respondents & cooking'

code, but codes such as 'time' and 'household influences' - to see if any broader links and patterns existed and to consider why, and their possible importance in relation to confidence and cooking.

Not every person or subject needed to fit the pattern, although if they did not, thinking about why not, helped to reveal and challenge what was emerging from the pattern. I found this was the case in a few respondents' situations. For instance, one respondent's approach towards cooking was between two of the patterns that came to my attention. This led to further exploration of whether the two patterns were substantiated and whether the respondent had a uniquely different pattern or leaned closer to one pattern than the other, and if so why this was the case. Strauss and Corbin highlighted that a well-developed theory accounts for differences and outliers as it adds depth and validity to the findings (1998, p.20). "Sometimes one doubts the validity of an explanation because the researcher has clearly made no attempt to deal with contrary cases" (Silverman 2000, p.11).

Strauss and Corbin suggest looking for the properties and dimensions, within and between codes and broader categories or headings, to define concepts (building blocks of theory), where:

...properties are the general or specific characteristics or attributes of a category, dimensions represent the location of a property along a continuum or range (1998, p.117).

Thinking of the codes as containing properties and dimensions led to looking at the codes again and noting what I considered the characteristics to be (what in the code or category stood out and gave it meaning) and the range within these characteristics. For instance, the characteristic or property of 'Time' was the time available for different food purchasing activities, with the dimension range of the code being 'abundant', 'sufficient', 'shortage' and 'changeable'. The range of 'time', in this instance, affected the characteristic of 'shops that were used'. Looking at the properties and dimensions

within and between codes involved listing and sketching visually what I believed the characteristics and ranges to be. These notes and diagrams were then contrasted with what was written down or sketched about other codes. The benefit of always thinking comparatively 'incident to incident' is that it forces the analysts to examine data at a dimensional level based on how respondents see events or happenings (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p.43).

Using the idea of looking for properties and dimensions aided in seeing how some codes linked together. They appeared to flow into one another, allowing links to appear, for example, the respondents' approach to cooking would, overall, reflect the food prepared and consumed. This 'approach to cooking' became an 'axial' code where categories (approach to cooking) were related to their subcategories (food prepared/food consumed). These linking categories/axial codes and the subcategories assisted in answering the 'who, what and where' type questions. This process of identifying linkages and creating categories continued over a long period and was often time-consuming and laborious. It was not always clear how to progress. Often codes and ideas were left for a period and re-visited at a later stage. Eventually I reached what is referred to as 'saturation' point where no new information seemed to emerge between and within codes and categories. The process was long, and despite having identified the linkages and categories as they emerged from the data, it was difficult to be confident about the task reaching saturation point, as it became clear that the process of analysing codes could potentially be endless.

Comparing the codes and categories helped to highlight similarities and differences in order to create new and improve existing categories and descriptions that could be integrated under common headings. From here, developing patterns as they emerged could be refined as part of the analysis process. From the categories and subcategories that linked together, 'themes' emerged where all the categories linked into eleven groups, or 'themes' as they were named. This process of analysis began with the Edinburgh respondents and was then repeated for the Toronto respondents' transcripts.

While most of the themes identified between Edinburgh and Toronto overlapped in title, the contents within the themes differed, as will be explained below.

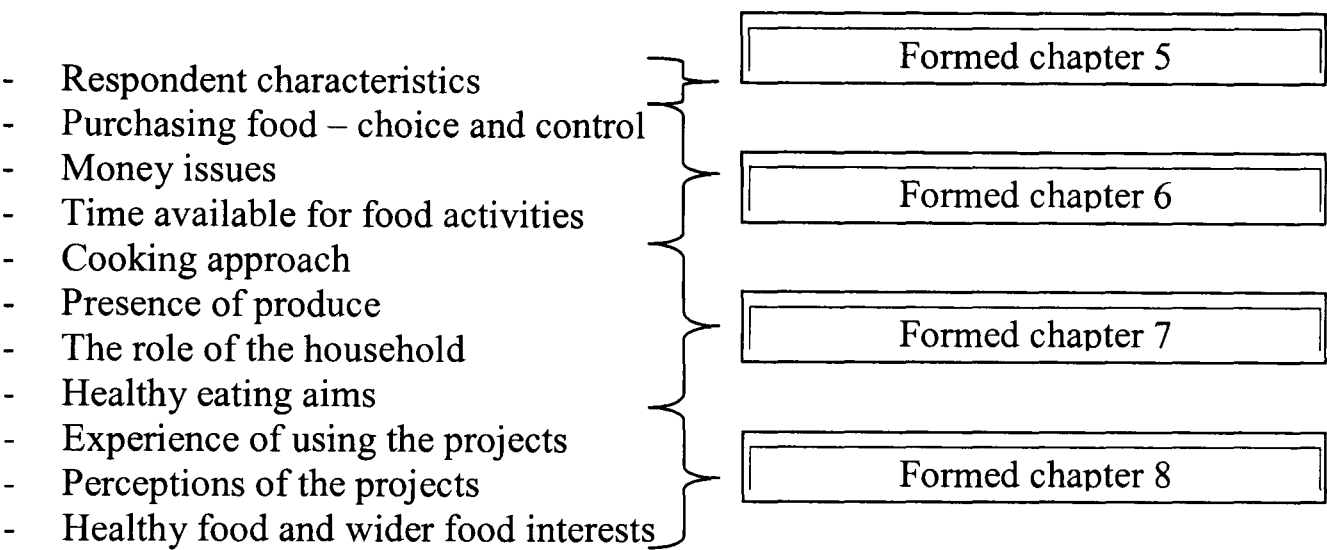
3.4.3 Phase 3 Comparison of the Themes from Both Projects

The next stage involved comparing the themes that had emerged from both projects. This entailed looking for similarities and differences between each theme and trying to develop further the concepts emerging. As the research was cross-cultural, the differences were based not only on how the projects operated, but also on cultural differences.

Sometimes the different countries shared the same theme, such as ‘Purchasing Food Strategy – choice and control’, but contained different characteristics within them. One category within ‘Purchasing Food Strategy’ was ‘shopping and time’ which contained different patterns for each country. Simplified, the pattern followed that more Edinburgh respondents had time available through not being in full time employment, which meant they would try to use many shops to find the best deals. In Toronto, limited time experienced by most respondents, due to the hours they worked or studied, meant that they were restricted in the shops they could use. In other cases, the themes between the two projects were different reflecting the cultural and CFI differences, such as the themes that related to the respondents’ social contact and forms of communication with the projects. For instance, the co-op resulted in more face-to-face contact among the users than the GFB did. The differences between the themes and countries were then looked at in more detail to pull out the patterns emerging with regard to the respondents, the initiatives and other themes.

The themes were linked together where appropriate and at the end of this process formed four distinct areas, which later formed the basis for the findings chapters of the thesis.

The themes fell under the following headings:



Further work was required to develop the themes and the subsequent emerging chapters. These three areas of importance were around food choice related to the food provisioning process of purchasing, preparing, cooking and eating, as well as to respondents’ attitudes and behaviour towards the CFIs. From the three main themes, the writing up of the findings began. This involved a lot of time devoted to the development of the different ways the themes grouped together. Literature that related to the themes was useful in developing explanations and the findings. Utilising a visual approach about what was emerging, such as tables (as used in chapter 6) or very rough diagrams (which were not included in the final chapters) was invaluable in taking the study further.

Revisiting the codes and transcripts when necessary aided the write-up process and the identification of quotes to demonstrate typical patterns, similarities and differences. Having the printout of each code, from using NUDIST, gave all the quotes that fitted each section and allowed a selection of quotes to be used when illustrating a point, to ensure every respondent was represented in some way. Revisiting each respondent’s transcripts highlighted how they fitted into what had been written. It was useful when considering whether the analysis over-simplified the patterns and processes that emerged

and whether the findings represented the complexities of the situation that the respondents faced.

When writing up the findings that had emerged from the data I was aware of my own personal influence, as I was personally selecting the data that I felt most pertinent and linking it together with how I considered it to logically flow. As Denscombe points out:

...the researcher's self plays a significant role in the production and interpretation of the data... the researcher's self is *inevitably* an integral part of the analysis, and should be acknowledged as such (1998, p.268).

Strauss and Corbin recommend that any theory emerging from the data should be recognisable to participants; larger concepts should apply even if the respondents do not fit every instance. They should fit the main point, with differences in properties and dimensions for case variations being apparent (Strauss & Corbin 1998, p.143). To help make sure the analysis was relevant to the users it would have been useful to feed back my analysis to the respondents to see if they could "identify with the research account and feel that it accords with their feelings and beliefs" (Denscombe 1998, p.275). This would have enhanced the validity of the findings or led me to revisit the transcriptions to confirm the analysis accurately reflected the data. Instead, due to time constraints, the findings were fed back to the project employees who offered their views and opinions. The main constraints of the 'findings' chapters were discussed with employees of the initiative and my supervisors. The projects were able to feed back their views and whether the findings reflected the reality of the projects, which helped to triangulate the data and in some cases resulted in the projects introducing small changes from points that emerged. For instance, ECFI introduced a way to monitor when certain items of stock ran out at the co-ops to improve their ordering policy, as a result of many respondents' raising concerns in the interviews about some items of produce being sold out quickly.

The following chapters present the findings of this research. Firstly, I provide further detail about the projects (chapter 4) and an outline of the respondents (chapter 5). The main findings from the analysis of the panel study are in chapters 6-8. Finally, the conclusion will outline CFI and policy recommendations.

Chapter 4 The Projects

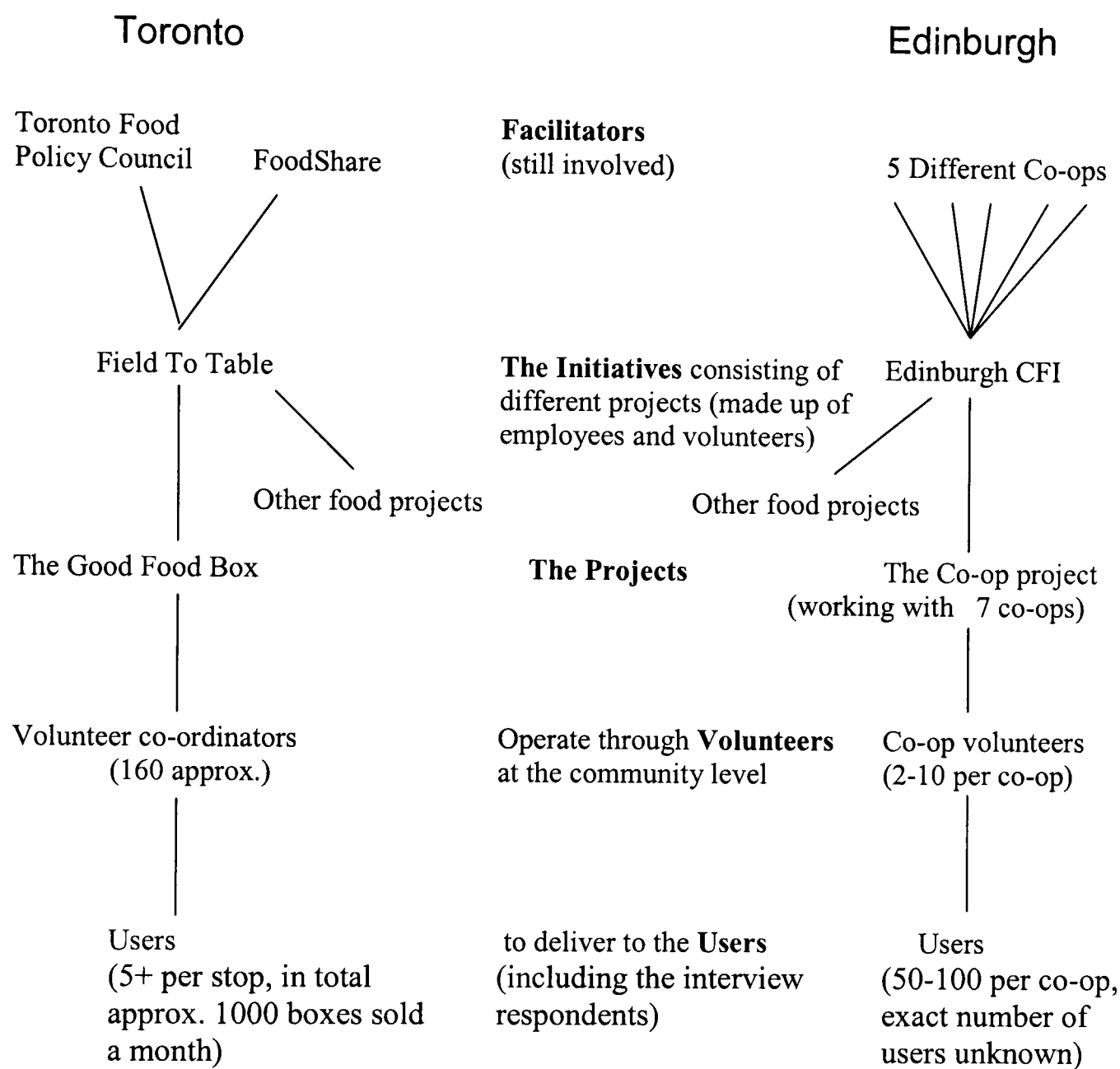
4.1 Introduction

The GFB project in Toronto and the co-op project in Edinburgh had both operated for a similar length of time. However, their origins and the initiatives of which the projects are part differ in how and why they were established. Both projects are entwined with their countries' political and policy approach to food issues in relation to low-income communities. This chapter sets out the backgrounds, values of the projects and the way they operated. This will place the user respondents' experiences and opinions, which are explored in the following chapters, in the context of the project that they used. The first part of the chapter looks at the origin, purpose and design of the projects. The second part concentrates on the structure of the projects. This study concentrates on the initiatives in relation to the GFB project in Toronto and the co-op project in Edinburgh (for details about the initiatives' other projects refer to Appendix D).

4.2 An Overview of the Projects

Figure 4.1 on the next page, provides an outline of the comparable layers of involvement in the initiatives and how they are linked. Both projects started for the practical reason of encouraging and providing people in low-income communities with an opportunity to purchase affordable fresh produce, by addressing some of the barriers that they faced. The design and purpose of the projects reflected their countries' political approaches on food issues in relation to low-income communities. The projects' purposes had also been significantly influenced by the different people and organisations involved in their creation. In Toronto, the GFB project was developed through an attempt to reduce the increasing number of people in poverty who were going 'hungry', as demonstrated through the rise in the number of people obtaining free food from food banks. The initiative in Edinburgh developed to improve the functioning of the existing community co-ops, in order to enable people on a low income to obtain affordable food.

Figure 4.1 Layers of Involvement in the CFIs



This figure shows the *layers* in the structure of the initiatives. It does not include resource and financial inputs.

The GFB project operated by buying produce in bulk at a low cost and selling the produce in boxes at wholesale prices. Employees and volunteers packed the produce into boxes that were ordered and paid for a week in advance. The boxes were delivered to drop-off sites where volunteer co-ordinators arranged for the users to collect their order. Each co-ordinator had five or more project users. The co-ops operated by selling

produce at wholesale prices for two hours a week in a local community building. The produce was ordered, priced and delivered to the co-ops by the Edinburgh initiative. Each local co-op was run by two to ten volunteers with the users, usually local residents, purchasing the produce. The initiative provided support and training to run the co-ops and it also organised health promotion activities.

4.3 Origins

This section sets out the reasons that gave rise to the inception and development of the projects.

4.3.1 Toronto

Good Food Box (GFB)

The GFB project operated as part of the Field To Table (FTT) initiative which was created after the formation of two organisations; FoodShare, a charitable non-profit organisation, and the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC). These organisations had their origins in political issues related to food access. To understand the purpose of the GFB project, it is helpful to understand the involvement of FoodShare and the TFPC.

FoodShare

FoodShare originated as a municipal initiative set up in 1985 by the mayor at that time in response to the increasing number of people requiring food bank assistance. FoodShare originally co-ordinated information about emergency food services, such as food bank locations, through a volunteer-run 'hunger hotline'. It also took on the role of campaigning for policies to improve people's access to food through adequate incomes and increased welfare rates. FoodShare believed accessing food was a basic human 'right': therefore people required an adequate income to buy enough food. FoodShare was formed with political backing to try and redress food 'hunger' poverty issues.

As outlined in Chapter one, the concept of food security at an individual and community level became important in understanding the factors that resulted in people being unable to access food. In its approach to address community food security, FoodShare moved to developing broader aims to include health, agriculture and environmental food issues, as well as income concerns. Its work moved from a 'charity model', where it assisted people to use food banks and food handouts and where assistance led to the recipients being passive, to a 'food security model'. The food security model looked beyond an adequate income as the solution to food access problems and considered ways in which communities and individuals could address their own hunger problems in a more positive, active way. This signified a shift towards working with communities in order to pilot self-help projects as a means of tackling local food security issues. Small-scale self-help projects had the potential to address short-term issues of household hunger, while also providing longer-term benefits by building the capacity of individuals and communities (FoodShare 2000). The purpose of FoodShare had therefore grown from issues about people's rights to food, to the development of food security as a model to tackle food issues. FoodShare introduces projects to communities and works with them to improve the projects' effectiveness.

Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC)

As part of the 1989 Healthy Toronto 2000 Strategy, it was requested that the Medical Officer of Health establish a Food Policy Council that would concern itself with food and nutrition (MacRae 1994). FoodShare, along with other community groups, contributed to the development of the TFPC's objectives and in its implementation of these. The council facilitated the formation of partnerships and provided assistance to CFIs in order to try and reduce people's dependency on food banks. The TFPC also produced discussion documents and educational material relating to the food system, food safety and nutrition. It was concerned with promoting food production and distribution systems that were nutritionally and environmentally sound. The TFPC was therefore concerned with a wide range of issues related to the food system and how it

affected citizens of Toronto. It played “a bridging role between community agencies and the political and bureaucratic machinery of the city” (MacRae 1994, p.16).

The TFPC commissioned a feasibility study to suggest practical ways of linking regional farmers with low-income urban consumers in order to help reduce the city’s hunger problems through a non-charity structure. While some urban citizens could not afford fresh produce, some small-scale local farmers had problems selling their produce and often had surplus. The study led to the creation of the Field To Table (FTT) initiative. The naming was deliberate, emphasising the link between farmers and consumers. FTT was created in 1992, through the joint effort of the TFPC and FoodShare. The TFPC facilitated the initiative and worked with FoodShare in developing it. The initiative was then run as part of FoodShare and was linked to its vision and aims.

Field To Table (FTT)

The FTT initiative continued to have the support of the two established organisations, FoodShare and the TFPC. These organisations both originated from the municipality’s social concerns and had political support. This gave FTT a level of stability through political support that assisted in initiating and funding the initiative, as well as building up contacts and networks. Along with the support of the two organisations, FTT came about in an environment where the main food issues revolved around people’s ‘right to food’ in order to be food secure. The initiative tried to take a holistic approach to tackling food issues. This holistic approach was apparent in the GFB project, which had the purpose of tackling issues of food security at the community level through including the suppliers, the farmers, as well as the users, urban low-income communities.

4.3.2 Edinburgh

Pre-Edinburgh Community Food Initiative

In the early 1990s, five co-op projects existed in different low-income communities in Edinburgh. These projects were run on a small scale, in isolation from each other, and had often been started by local people volunteering their time and coming together to

find ways of buying affordable food. At that time they operated by purchasing affordable food from outside the local area, which could then be sold in their local community at a low price. The communities lacked the availability of affordable food from the shops that operated there.

The co-ops came together with community development workers to find ways in which they could improve the way they operated and to find a better solution to obtaining affordable food. To improve the way they operated, they required a co-ordinated, efficient warehouse and delivery system to purchase, store and transport large quantities of food, which all of the co-ops could use, and thereby benefit from the low-costs and efficiency associated through buying in bulk (ECFI 1997b). An application was submitted in 1994 for the funding to create ECFI (ECFI 1994). The initiative did not start through direct political backing but through the communities themselves. This 'grassroots' or bottom-up approach led to the co-op volunteers developing and deciding on the initiatives remit and placing the work with the co-ops as being central to its function. The co-ops intended to tackle food access problems and issues related to healthy eating, as a step towards helping to improve the diets of low-income communities.

Edinburgh Community Food Initiative (ECFI)

ECFI was created primarily to help sustain the community co-ops that already existed within Edinburgh. As previously outlined in chapter one, the political context of CFIs in Scotland at that time was primarily focused on health issues. The original co-ops started with the aim of purchasing a wide range of affordable food to address low-income and poverty issues. However, a health focus was built into ECFI's work to enable and encourage the consumption of specifically 'healthy' food, primarily fresh fruit and vegetables. This reflected the political climate with the introduction of the Scottish Diet Action Plan in 1996 and the availability of funding for initiatives that aimed to improve the health of the Scottish population. ECFI employees were to have two main functions: one being to take care of the food purchasing and distribution side of the co-ops; the

other to work with the co-op to develop them. ECFI was to supply city-wide, low-cost healthy food to co-operatives and to support them through education, advice and training in relation to their operation. The plans also included providing support to other organisations that promoted healthy eating as part of a city-wide health and anti-poverty strategy (ECFI 1997b, p.3). The concept of achieving 'food security' and considering farming and environmental issues, or taking a more holistic approach to food issues, was on ECFI's long-term plans but not addressed at the time of the research.

ECFI displayed a bottom-up approach where it was influenced by the groups who were going to benefit from it. It meant that ECFI was tied to the co-ops, as they constituted the main function of the initiative. Beyond working with the co-ops, the ECFI in early 2000 had less clarity than FTT about how to work towards its overall aims.

4.3.3 Summary

FTT evolved from poverty issues concerning one's right to food security. This resulted in the GFB project forming its aims and principles around the definition of food security so that it included poverty, health, agriculture and environmental issues in its design. ECFI remained focused on addressing health and poverty issues, which corresponded with the community's interests, as well as the political context of CFIs in Scotland. Approaching food access problems from these different ways had an influence on the values on which the projects were based. FTT operated a more top-down approach, but not entirely in a dominating hierarchy structure, as it had a social focus to it and it existed to serve and work with low-income communities. FTT had a top-down approach in the sense that it went to communities with its projects and had the backing of two established organisations to influence its development. ECFI, on the other hand, had a bottom-up approach through being facilitated by, and having the backing of, the communities they worked with.

4.4 Purpose and Design

The different influences involved in the origins of the projects were reflected in their vision and design.

FoodShare aimed to be multifaceted and innovative in working towards adopting sustainable approaches to food issues. Its mission statement was:

Working with communities to end hunger by improving access to safe, affordable, nutritious food that is personally acceptable (FoodShare 1997, p.2).

The GFB project, like the other FTT projects, was aligned behind FoodShare's mission statement objectives. The project's design aimed to facilitate a way of working towards developing food security, through working with farmers and low-income communities. As FTT was created to be innovative and experimental in reaching its aims, it was given a level of freedom to adapt and create new projects, as demonstrated through piloting several projects before initiating the GFB project.

ECFI was founded at the grassroots level by community volunteers, which closely tied its work to improving the co-ops and responding to the volunteers' needs. This restricted ECFI's freedom to be as experimental as FTT. This resulted in the employees having difficulty in developing and introducing changes, which they considered beneficial to the co-ops and the initiative. There was not a clear, shared vision for all the people involved in the initiative to follow, with some employees and volunteers holding different views about the purpose and direction of the co-op project. The more established co-ops were not always open to change, despite the need for them to improve their effectiveness and to maintain and attract new volunteers and users. ECFI, unlike FTT, was not starting with a 'blank page', where they would work with communities to create co-ops. Instead, their first major task was to improve what already existed, without a clear shared goal being held between the employees and volunteers. Based on

this starting point, ECFI employees developed ways of starting new co-ops that fostered closer ties and a common purpose between the employees and volunteers.

4.5 Community Development

The GFB and co-op projects had different community development approaches, with the GFB project being more top-down and the co-op project being more bottom-up. These different approaches gave the projects different roles in how they operated and different levels of control and ownership of the projects' developments.

The GFB project was designed on the premise of the project going into communities to attract groups and volunteers with the approach, "This is what we are offering. Do you wish to be a part of it? If so, this is how we can support you". The volunteers were akin to 'agents' of the project and bridged the gap between the project employees and the users. This approach of offering communities an opportunity to participate in the project allowed FTT to operate in an efficient manner, as the project essentially kept control of how it operated. It allowed the manager of the project to co-ordinate the aspect of reaching communities (the demand side) with the aim of including a role and space for the local farmers to contribute (the supply side). In a sense it allowed the project to take on a business approach in reaching its social aims.

The community development approach of ECFI saw the co-op volunteers as central to the project, as the volunteers essentially 'owned' their local co-op, reflecting the fact that some of the established co-ops facilitated the creation of the ECFI initiative. The co-ops, while guided by ECFI, were to develop in a way that encouraged volunteer and community ownership. Supporting the volunteers in maintaining the running of the co-op dominated ECFI's work with the co-ops. This concept of community development was not primarily predicated on a business principle. Instead, building good community social relations was paramount.

These different approaches are considered in more detail through the next part which looks at the structure of the projects and considers how this affected the way the projects operated. Table 4.1, outlines the different approaches taken.

Table 4.1 The different approaches to community development by the CFIs

	Field To Table	ECFI
Structure emerging	Top-Down	Bottom-Up
Purpose and design	Level of freedom to be innovative and experimental	Mainly tied to co-ops’ demands; difficult to facilitate change at ECFI level
Board of directors	Wide membership base, consisting mainly of non-project users	Narrow membership base, mainly consisting of co-op volunteers
Funding	Many sources and donations allowing FTT level of freedom.	Limited sources of funding for ECFI.
	Volunteer co-ordinators did not require funding	Each co-op had separate small grant funding
Employees	Communicated with volunteers through newsletters and telephone. Contact maintained with local farmers	Face to face development work with volunteers
Volunteers	‘Agents’ go between GFB and its users	‘Owners’ meet their users’ needs through support and assistance of ECFI
Responsibility and belonging	GFB responsible to volunteers and users; linked through newsletters.	ECFI responsible to co-op, co-op responsible to users.
	Participants part of city-wide project	Participants part of a community project that links to city-wide project
The produce and warehouse	Able to control warehouse side and link aims of including farmers and local communities	Some control over supply of produce to new co-ops: warehouse demand led by established co-ops bringing in tension of ownership versus efficiency and meeting user needs.

4.6 The Structure

4.6.1 Board of Directors

Both initiatives' boards of directors met monthly to ensure that the initiatives were following their objectives and to direct future plans. While the boards served the same purpose, they operated differently, reflecting the different members that made up the board. FoodShare's board had broad aims and a wide focus on how to achieve them, while ECFI was mainly tied to its co-op project and sometimes narrowly focused. The members from both initiatives were voted in at each initiative's annual general meeting.

FoodShare's board had a diverse membership base, consisting of people from different organisations involved in food and community issues or having knowledge and experience in the field. The board worked, "to develop, approve, and monitor FoodShare's vision, mission and strategic priorities" (FoodShare 1997, p.6). They were able to keep the initiative focused on its mission statement so that there was a level of cohesion and understanding of what all of the projects were aiming towards. FoodShare was accountable to the board. The majority of the board members were not direct users of the projects, although their local community or organisation may have participated in some of the projects. This reflected FoodShare's top-down approach, and could bring into question how well it met and understood the needs of the communities it served. However, each project of FoodShare did have its own method in which to obtain informal feedback.

ECFI's board, on the other hand, consisted of community volunteers from the co-ops, with guidance from the local council and health board. The board members were therefore the users of the initiative, which meant that their interest often lay in improving their co-op project through ECFI, as opposed to considering wider community food issues. This resulted in the board sometimes having a narrow focus on the development of the initiative in relation to its aims and the way that all of the projects operated. However, the 'client-based' board also had the effect of making the initiative

accountable to the people who it aimed to reach, reflecting the 'bottom-up' approach it adopted. It gave the volunteers involved in the running of the co-ops a chance to be heard and to influence what were seen as primarily 'their' co-ops. The focus on the co-ops sometimes resulted in tension between the employees working on other projects and what the volunteers wanted. Some board members and ECFI employees believed that a wider membership base would have been beneficial in increasing its focus on food issues beyond the way the co-ops operated.

4.6.2 Funding

Funding for the initiatives, like other community projects, was problematic, time consuming to obtain and a permanent concern to manage. Until 2000, FoodShare's mix of sources of funding had given it a substantial budget, up to a million pounds annually (\$2 million Canadian, (The exchange rate used throughout the study has been based on the 2000 exchange rates of approximately £1 = \$2 Canadian)). ECFI received Urban Aid Funding totalling £175,000 over three years, until May 2000, which at that time made ECFI the highest funded CFI in Britain. Since 2000, the amount of funding available for both initiatives has been reduced and led to restructuring within the initiatives.

The mix of sources of funding for FoodShare assisted it in working towards its aim of being innovative and experimental. Its income allowed it a level of stability, as the money came from different sources, unlike ECFI which at the time had one main source of funding: the government. If one source of funding was reduced or stopped, it did not prevent FTT from operating, although it could affect certain areas of the initiative. Some of FoodShare's income consisted of donations from individuals and organisations through direct mailing campaigns or from gifts-in-kind. This type of funding was not tied to a particular part of the initiative and therefore allowed an amount of freedom in where it was spent, such as meeting any shortfall the GFB project had between its funding, income from GFB sales and actual costs incurred. All levels of government - municipal, provincial and federal - offered support in the form of grants for specific projects and United Way agency funding was received annually. The United Way

agency, previously known as Community Chest, is a fundraising body that operates in North America, with local boards deciding on how to locally distribute the money raised between charities and ventures in the community.

The structure of the GFB meant that each volunteer co-ordinator drop-off site did not require any funding, although when a site was linked with an organisation, the organisation sometimes subsidised the users' costs. For example, a church donated five dollars to every box ordered by its users as a form of financial assistance and to encourage uptake of the project.

ECFI's funding mainly derived from a single source and was less flexible and offered less stability than FoodShare's funding. ECFI had problems in obtaining funding from May 2000, when its Urban Aid funding ceased. There was a lack of assistance from local authorities in providing advice on where to apply for further funding, as the government funding system had been recently restructured to facilitate funding to local areas rather than city-wide projects. Employees of ECFI spent a lot of time applying for different sources of funding and there was uncertainty about the future of the project. This meant that the work of the project suffered, as the main focus became finding funding and restructuring the initiative to cope with a reduction in income. The funding situation of ECFI further reduced its freedom to be as innovative as employees would have liked.

Each co-op needed a small amount of funding to operate and was funded by different small grants under each co-op's own arrangements, reinforcing the idea of each co-op being managed and owned by the community within which it operated.

4.6.3 Employees' Roles

Most of the employees' roles across the initiatives were similar in relation to the GFB and co-op projects. The initiatives each had a co-ordinator, development workers, warehouse assistants and drivers. Some volunteers helped out at the warehouse while the

majority of them were involved at the community level, as a co-ordinator for the GFB or as a volunteer running the co-ops in Edinburgh. FTT had more employees and volunteers than ECFI, reflecting the fact that the project was larger. Since 2000, both initiatives have undergone some restructuring, due to a decrease in their funding. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of employees and larger workloads for some of the remaining employees.

ECFI had problems employing a new co-ordinator for the initiative, which meant it missed out on someone to ensure the employees' work had cohesion and a shared purpose. The narrow focus of the board of directors, a reduction in funding and the lack of a co-ordinator had an impact on what ECFI could achieve over the research period, especially regarding the development work within the co-ops. While the co-ops still operated on a weekly basis, they did not develop in the way they had planned. ECFI kept up with supplying stock but did not have a sufficient number of workers to support the co-ops' development needs. When ECFI did spend time with the volunteers, this included visiting the co-ops and dealing with issues on a face-to-face basis. This personal approach, while time consuming, offered an opportunity to address each co-op's different concerns.

FTT lost valuable employees at the development worker level, which impacted on the time employees could spend developing the GFB but it still had its employees at the management/co-ordinator level to keep focused on its work. The GFB did not operate through regular face-to-face contact with its volunteers. The large numbers of volunteer co-ordinators were kept informed through newsletters and telephone communications. This meant it was still possible to stay in touch with the volunteers despite the reduction in the number of employees.

4.6.4 Role of the Volunteers

The volunteers were essential in linking the projects with the communities with which they worked. As the projects' design and concept of community development were different, so were the responsibilities of the volunteers.

The GFB volunteer co-ordinators acted like 'agents' of the GFB through having set responsibilities of placing user orders, collecting money and ensuring users received their orders at their drop-off site. The volunteers could choose how their drop-off stop operated within these responsibilities. The volunteer co-ordinators provided user feedback to FTT, which enabled the project to be responsive to the users' needs. The feedback was essential to improve the project's ability to respond to the needs of the users.

As 'owners' of the co-ops, some volunteers had many responsibilities for the running of the co-op, was time consuming and demanding. However, as the co-ops were considered to belong to the volunteers they had a level of control over the direction the co-op took and were in a position to influence the project more than the GFB volunteer co-ordinators.

To assist the volunteers, both projects offered advice and feedback opportunities. The GFB volunteer co-ordinators received assistance in a more passive form of a regular newsletter. The volunteers were regularly updated on the developments of the GFB project and wider initiative. Therefore; although the co-ordinators did not all meet up with each other, they were aware, if they wanted to be, of what was happening within the project, its aims and future plans. The co-ordinators also received a manual outlining the benefits of being involved in the project and how other co-ordinators approached their roles. Meetings were held twice a year for volunteers to exchange views and experiences with each other and the FTT employees. Any co-ordinator with over ten orders received a free GFB as an incentive and sign of gratitude for their work. This once again reinforced the idea that the volunteers were part of the wider GFB project.

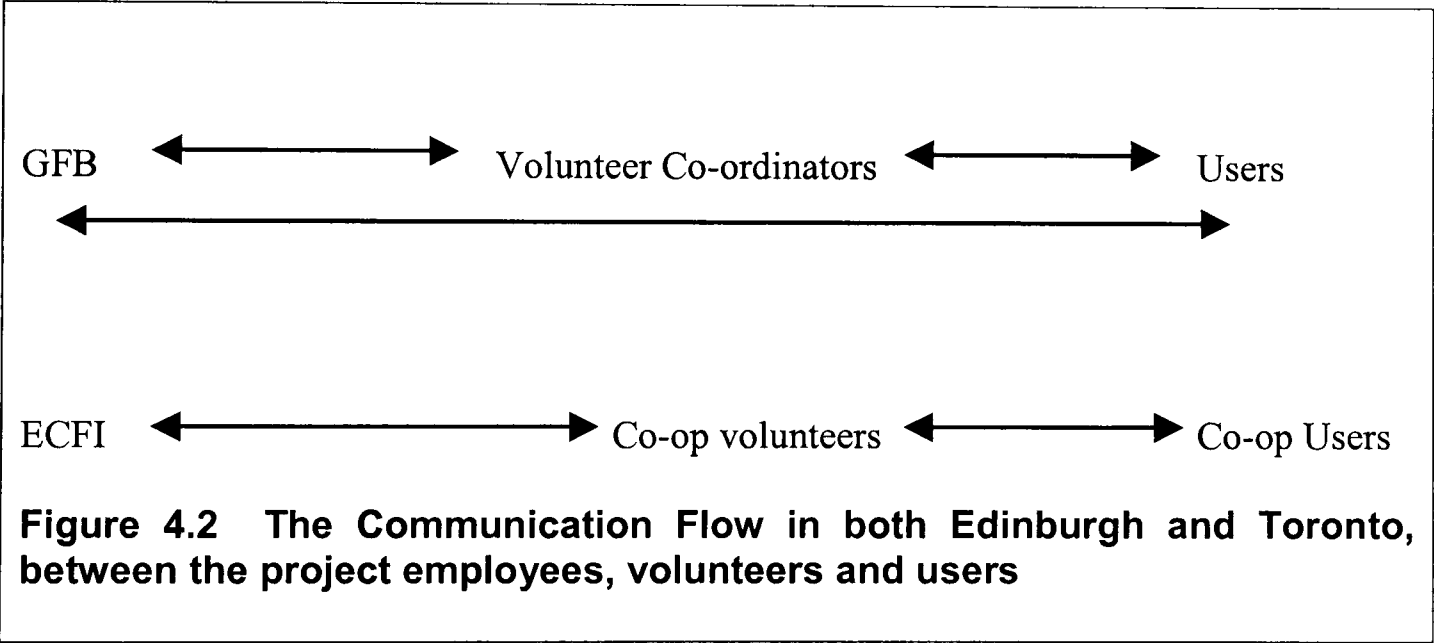
ECFI employees informally worked with the volunteers through their personal support and development work with the co-ops. This reflected the project's objectives of developing and improving the co-ops and the skills of those who worked in them. The volunteers were mainly focused on their own co-op rather than being aware of what other co-ops were doing and the wider picture of food access issues. The co-op projects did not offer the volunteers any reward in kind, as any incentive or expression of gratitude was considered the responsibility of each co-op.

The way in which the volunteers were viewed within the projects, as being part of the GFB project, or to be supported by ECFI, demonstrated the different top-down and bottom-up approaches. It also reflected the initiatives' concepts of community development and structure of ownership and responsibility. These differences may have influenced the volunteers' support, interest in and knowledge of their initiative and its goals. For instance, some volunteers may have preferred having a large role within their co-op and a project that belonged to the community. While FTT did not result in the volunteers having the same level of ownership, they were able to run their drop-off site in a manner that suited their schedule. It may have allowed more people from within the community to volunteer, as they were not restricted to being available the same two hours every week (as at the co-ops); the time spent on the project could be spread out. Drop-off sites could also be run from a variety of community settings, including people's homes, children's nurseries and places of work. The boxes could also be delivered without the volunteer being present, which allowed flexibility for people who worked and wanted to volunteer.

Both projects were in the process of building more networks with other agencies as a means of recruiting more volunteers and users. It also meant more organisations could have the responsibility for a drop-off site or co-op so that the volunteering roles could be shared within an organisation to help increase the sustainability and credibility of the drop-off site or co-op.

4.6.5 Accountability to the Users

The GFB project was directly accountable to its users. As outlined in Figure 4.2, the users could directly contact FTT, who ran the GFB project, if they had any queries dealing with the service or produce they received or their views could be relayed through their volunteer co-ordinator. This depicts the top-down approach, where FTT responded to the volunteers’ and users’ needs and concerns. FTT ensured that it kept its users informed about the initiative, that it provided nutritional and educational material, as well as being accountable to them. FTT would adapt and respond to the users’ concerns. This contact between the users and FTT led to support from some users, not just for their own local volunteer and drop-off site but for the whole initiative. If the user was interested, they could increase their knowledge about the project, how it operated and what its aims were.



ECFI, on the other hand, based around its bottom-up influence and aim to support the co-ops, considered the users to belong to the co-ops, and therefore the co-ops were directly accountable to the users, with ECFI being responsible to the volunteers, as shown in Figure 4.2. There was no formal mechanism for the users to directly access information from ECFI about its work, or for them to give feedback directly to ECFI unless an employee was visiting one of the co-ops and spoke with them. While the co-

ops could adapt and respond to the users, wider concerns might not have been fed back to ECFI as there were no formal mechanisms for this to happen. Many users were unaware of ECFI and its aims, it meant that they were unsure about where the produce was from; was it free, waste or charity, and what were the aims of the co-ops. The information available for the users could affect the usage and support for the project.

4.6.6 The Produce and Warehouse

Even the running of the warehouses and ordering systems reflected the projects' approaches, through their level of control over the operation of the warehouse system operated. This was despite the fact that they both had similar warehouse problems related to dealing with perishable produce that required efficient purchasing mechanisms to ensure minimal waste. Both projects aimed for high-quality produce to emphasise to the users that they were valued and that affordable food did not have to be of a low quality.

The produce sold included staple items (for example, potatoes, carrots and apples) and special offers (such as, produce in season or unusual and expensive items like mangoes and pineapples). ECFI sold its produce at the co-ops per unit, which allowed the users choice in the quantity and variety of produce purchased. To allow a wide selection of produce meant that the co-ops had to be supplied with lots of variety and large quantity of produce. The users of FTT chose in advance the type of box they wanted, but not its exact contents. Therefore, FTT knew in advance how many boxes to make up, which allowed it to buy just the right amount of produce, thereby reducing waste and increasing its efficiency.

The GFB was sold in the form of the following prices and boxes, which all included fruit and vegetables, except for the fruit box:

GFB	\$15 (£7.50)	Small GFB	\$10 (£5)
Large organic	\$30 (£15)	Small organic	\$25 (£12.50)
Fruit box	\$10 (£5)	Reach for five	\$10 (£5)

FTT decided what produce went into the boxes. The boxes therefore consisted of produce from local farmers and from the Toronto food market. The produce ordered fitted in with FTT’s aim of being able to purchase seasonal produce that was cost effective and from local farmers. It also helped the environment, as local food did not travel as far as other foods, thereby reducing pollution. This meant the project concentrated on what the suppliers could offer that was value for money, seasonal and fitted in with working towards its food security aims. Whenever possible, the project chose to support local organic farmers who used environmentally sound practices. FTT hoped to be innovative in developing the practical aspects of farming into CFIs. FTT tried to encourage people to expand their interest in food by regularly changing the box’s content. This aim was helped through negotiation with some farmers to grow some unusual produce, such as bok choy for stir-fries. Sometimes, to emphasise that the food was fresh from the farm, it would be unwashed or in a more natural form than found at the supermarkets: for instance brussel sprouts would be left on their stalks. Having the warehouse supply-led enabled the GFB project to work towards food security, by addressing the suppliers’ as well as users’ food access issues. The employees and twenty volunteers packed a thousand boxes once a week. The volunteers received lunch and a free GFB for their time and effort. Involving volunteers helped employees stay connected with the communities that it worked with.

The bottom-up approach of ECFI meant that the established co-ops continued to order their own produce from ECFI based on previous sales and user requests, with ECFI deciding on the orders for the newer co-ops. Therefore in relation to the co-ops, ECFI

was a mix of being demand and supply-led. The demand-led system led to purchasing based on what the user (in this case the volunteers making up the order) wanted, which meant that it was not always the best 'value for money' produce available in the market. The users of the co-ops then missed out on the market's best deals. When ECFI selected the stock for the new co-ops, which made it supply-led, the order could reflect the market's best offers. This resulted in the newer co-ops having a larger selection of produce, with more variety of produce each week than the other co-ops.

ECFI would have preferred a system where they had more control to choose what to order for all of the co-ops or to communicate to all of the co-ops in advance what produce was in season and the best deals at the market. ECFI was unable to buy special offers and distribute them to the more established co-ops. These co-ops liked being able to place their own orders, *but* also wished for a mechanism that would inform them of any current offers. The ordering system needed to adapt so that volunteers and users would become more aware of what was the seasonal best value, in order to help their money go further. This was where the new style of co-ops benefited the user because ECFI employees chose the stock and could make better use of its suppliers. If ECFI had more control over the warehouse system, this could have led to better value for money and more variety of produce in all of the co-ops. The problem in ECFI finding the best way to run the warehouse illustrated the lack of cohesion in bringing together the purpose and goals of the co-op project in relation to the volunteers' roles. The notion of volunteer ownership of the co-ops meant the volunteers needed to be involved in the choice of produce on sale. This approach assumed that the volunteers wanted this responsibility for ordering the stock.

Both projects tried to keep wastage to a minimum. At FTT, any unused produce was used by the kitchen or composted. At ECFI, wastage was composted or used by a local farm. As the produce was sold per unit at the co-ops ECFI took back any stock that the co-ops did not sell. The stock was then sold at the next co-op, if it was still of a good quality. ECFI's main problem was what to do with co-ops' returns near the end of the

week when there were no other co-ops open and the stock would not keep over the weekend, this was when wastage occurred. FTT's challenge was how to keep the produce different and exciting. It was also concerned with how to purchase more produce directly from the farmers.

4.7 Discussion

The research about CFIs, completed by McGlone et al (1999) in Britain and Lipski et al (1998) in Ontario, found that although many different types of food projects existed, no model stood out as being more sustainable than any other. They did, however, identify certain influential aspects of each project that contributed to sustainability. These aspects have been grouped together and will now be discussed in relation to the structure and operation of the GFB and co-op project in this study.

One of the most crucial factors in determining the sustainability of a project was finance. How a project was funded and for how long gave rise to determining whether a project was sustainable. This was borne out by the two projects studied: they both experienced funding problems that had repercussions for the projects' future developments. Toronto had its funding reduced and ECFI employees had to spend much time finding new sources of funding to secure the future of the project. Both projects were required to make changes to their initiatives to reflect the cuts in funding they experienced.

The next important point in maintaining sustainability was the level of community involvement and linked to this, the project's capacity to respond to the needs of all those involved. The food projects all required enough time to establish themselves and become integrated into the community. The genuine involvement of local people as active participants and equal partners is important (McGlone et al. 1999, findings). This is an interesting point in relation to the two initiatives' different approaches. ECFI was active in pursuing the involvement of the volunteers in maintaining the food co-ops, reflecting its bottom-up approach. The volunteers were seen as owners of the co-ops and every

effort was made for the volunteers to be able to run their co-op and operate it in a way that suited their community's needs. ECFI employees arranged meetings with individual co-ops to specifically focus on their unique needs. ECFI communicated with and involved the users on a more ad hoc basis, as the co-op volunteers were the link to the users, relaying information between the users and ECFI. The users did not usually deal with ECFI.

FTT, on the other hand, took another approach where it could be argued that there was not genuine involvement of local people at the level at which decisions were made. While volunteer involvement was essential it was in a different way to the co-op volunteers. The GFB volunteers ran their own stop but they were not considered project owners, in the same sense as found in Edinburgh. However, what played a key role in FTT's sustainability were the mechanisms that it provided for volunteers and users to feedback their opinions that could then be acted upon. Their opinions were received through being able to contact FTT directly and by taking part in events designed to ensure the responses were listened to. Thus volunteers and users could feel that they were part of the project and become more involved in FTT, if they wanted to.

Other critical factors, which both pieces of research identified as contributing to sustainability, were professional support and the building of partnerships, which both projects worked towards improving. The projects tried to extend and build their relationships with other agencies to help create more sustainable drop-off sites and local co-ops. The agencies offered the opportunity to support and work with the volunteers and users when the initiatives were unable to. They also assisted in recruiting new volunteers, as they had experience of working with the local area and could help with obtaining funding. For instance, in Toronto some agencies subsidised the cost of the GFB for the users and in Edinburgh some agencies assisted individual co-ops in applying for and receiving funding. Both projects were flexible in incrementally building up these relationships.

The credibility of the initiatives among volunteers, users and local agencies was crucial to their sustainability. FTT's credibility was strengthened through its approach of keeping everyone informed of the project and the wider initiative through regular newsletters. The initiative's work involved several projects that operated in different parts of Toronto, its size and coverage added to its credibility as an organisation. ECFI was also city-wide and carried a level of trust among the agencies and volunteers involved in the co-ops and other ECFI projects. However, ECFI's function and aims were often unknown by the users, as there was not a mechanism that kept the users directly informed about ECFI's other work and involvement in the co-ops. Therefore there was sometimes a lack of knowledge among the co-op users about ECFI, which may have affected its support and credibility.

While the GFB and co-op project demonstrated two different ways of operating based on their different histories, they illustrated many of the points identified by McGlone et al. (1999) and Lipski et al (1998) as influential in maintaining sustainable projects. They faced similar challenges and problems in maintaining their projects, as well as showing differences.

Overall, the background of the two initiatives made a difference in the freedom, direction and backing they had to develop their projects. The sources and amounts of funding, as well as the role of the board of directors, were important in shaping the projects. ECFI had emerged through a bottom-up approach, which allowed the co-op project to respond to the needs of the different local communities. However, it also had the problem of being narrowly focussed, such as missing out environmental and farming issues and a more strategic, wider vision of how the project could develop. FTT had a more holistic, wide vision and long-term approach. FTT had a top-down approach that could lead to it being 'out of touch' with the communities that they worked with. To rectify this FTT introduced ways to ensure that volunteers, users and people involved at the ground level could have their views heard and listened to.

Both projects regarded their volunteers as essential to their community development work. The volunteers' role in Toronto was clearly specified, although they could be flexible in achieving it. ECFI's more established volunteers initially ran the co-ops, which made it difficult for both the volunteers and ECFI to agree on where change was needed. The newer co-ops and their volunteers worked more closely with ECFI, resulting in more structured co-ops and less responsibility for the volunteers.

This chapter provided an outline of the history and aims behind the CFIs being studied in the context of each other and other research about CFIs sustainability. It shows that, despite the backgrounds based on the different countries' approaches to food issues, the initiatives still experienced some very similar challenges when trying to improve the food access in low-income communities.

Chapter 5 The Community Food Initiative Respondents

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the Toronto and Edinburgh CFI users who were interviewed for this study. The chapter aims to outline the characteristics of the users in the context of the research carried out. The respondents' initial interests and motivations in using the initiatives are highlighted. This chapter forms the basis for the subsequent chapters, which will explore the respondents' continuing motivations, perceptions and available opportunities to participate and benefit from the initiatives. The analysis has taken into consideration the different stages of the food process in making food choices, as outlined in chapter two (purchasing, preparing, cooking and consumption).

Eleven Co-op and ten GFB users were interviewed. The respondents were mothers of households, as stated in chapter three, who had at least one child under the age of twelve years old. The mothers had used the projects for between two and four months, prior to the first set of interviews. In Toronto, one husband also participated in the interviews with his wife.

All of the female respondents were the main, or only, person responsible for the purchasing, preparing and cooking of food for the rest of the household. Only a few of the males in the households frequently assisted with the food shopping, whilst others were involved in the food preparation and cooking of dishes to varying extents. The food roles and responsibility taken by the interviewed mothers were synonymous with Henson et al's (1998) identification of 'home managers', as outlined in chapter two. Henson et al (1998) identified the home manager as the person responsible for the majority of food related tasks, and who was likely to bring about change in the household's diet even if they were not the person who wanted the change. The home manager was the main person responsible for all aspects of food within the household. Food choices were thereby made by the home manager, who took into consideration the

preferences and needs of the other household members (Henson et al. 1998). The role of being a home manager was taken seriously by the respondents:

Being responsible for buying all the food, what does this mean to you?

Just trying to find a combination of good, healthy, nutritious food, [that is] affordable, which are the two things which are quite hard to balance together (Penny, Edinburgh (E)).

It means I'm in charge of not just mine but my children's nutritional health, which is very important, for example we don't do junk food, as we call it. ...I feel it's very important to teach my kids... to eat properly (Cath, Toronto (T)).

5.2 The Respondents' Characteristics

5.2.1 Household Composition

Tables 5.1 and 5.2, on the next two pages, summarise the composition and living circumstances of the respondents and their household members. Cultural differences between the countries were apparent from the outset. All of the Edinburgh co-op respondents were white and from the UK. The Toronto respondents' households were more ethnically diverse than the Edinburgh households. This difference reflected the fact that Toronto is more ethnically diverse than Edinburgh.

All of the households had between one and three children, regardless of whether the household was headed by one or two parents. Just over half the respondents from both projects were single parents. Although there was no recent data available, the FTT employees based on earlier data and a 'hunch', believed that more single than two parent households on low-incomes used the project. Previous research by FTT in 1996 found single-parent households were more likely to be low-income purchasers of the GFB, whereas two-parent households were more likely to be represented in the higher income categories (Smaller World Communications 1996).

Table 5.1. An Overview of the Edinburgh Respondents, at the First Set of Interviews

	Ethnic origin	Marital status	Number of children	Employment	Income ++ and source	weekly spend on food £	% income on food
Jane	British	Married	2	Both UE	Low Benefit	30-40	Over 25
Kate	British	Single	2	UE	Low Benefit	35-45	Over 33
Becky	British	Single	2	UE	Low Benefit	50	Almost 50
Trish	British	Married	2	Both UE	Low Benefit	40	Almost 50
Penny	British	Married	2	UE & H: FT	Medium Salary	50-60	25
Jenni	British	Single	1	UE	Low Benefit	20	24
Sian	British	Single	1	Student	Low Grant	100*	Over 50
Jo	British	Single	1	UE	Low Benefit	25-30	Almost 33
Sheena	British	Single	1	UE	Low Benefit	30-40	33
Hannah	British	Married	3	PT & H: FT	Medium Salary	100-120*	Almost 50
Sarah	British	Married	3	Student & H: FT	Low Loan & salary	80	40

Terms

- * This amount is for more than two adults within the household
- H Husband's employment status
- Employment – UE unemployed, PT/FT in part-time/full-time employment
- ++ The level of income was based on respondents' perceptions

Table 5.2. An Overview of the Respondents from Toronto, at the First Set of Interviews

	Ethnic origin	Marital status	Number of children	Employment	Income ++ and source	Weekly spend on food \$	% income on food
Amanda	Caribbean	Single	3	UE	Low Benefit	50+	-
Cath	Black Canadian	Single	2	PT	Low Wage	60-65	-
Rosie	Black Canadian	Single	1	FT	Low Salary	60	20
Tania and John	South American/ Canadian	Married	1	T- FT J- PT	Medium Wage	75	15
Laura	White Canadian	Married	1	Student H: FT	Low Wage/loan	60-70	-
Rachel	Black Canadian	Single	3	Student	Low Loan	110	33
Elise	South American	Single	1	Student	Low Loan	100	30
Viv	White European	Single	2	PT	Low Wage	70-150	30
Pam	White Canadian	Single	1	PT	Low Wage	40-50	33
Helen	White Canadian	Married	3	UE H: FT	Medium Salary	200 max	20

Terms

H Husband’s employment status

Employment – UE unemployed, PT in part time employment, FT in full time employment

++ The level of income was based on respondents’ opinions.

Only the respondents with medium incomes (one in Toronto and two in Edinburgh) were homeowners with mortgages to pay. The majority of co-op respondents lived in rented Local Authority council flats with their rent paid for them through government assistance, in the form of Housing Benefit. All but one household in Toronto lived in an apartment, of which most were co-operative (co-op) housing, which meant the rent was subsidised in accordance with the household's income. Three of the Toronto households also had child-care subsidies that varied according to their income.

I don't work full-time yet which I want to, so I am a very low-income person and I guess I work around it, but it's not great... I have help with rent so that is okay but if I would have to pay a full rent I would not be able to manage (Viv, T).

5.2.2 Employment and Income

Most of the co-op respondents in Edinburgh were unemployed or chose to stay at home with their children. In Toronto, the majority of the respondents were in paid employment or were full-time students, with two mothers staying at home to look after their children. For three respondents in total, the husband's salary enabled them to stay at home with their children. These households had a higher income than the other households did, although the husband's income was not enough for them to be unconcerned by the amount of money spent on their food budget, as Hannah in Edinburgh outlined:

...[our money] it's just like eked out. [Food] is just really expensive... I mean Pete's got a really good job, his salary's not bad at all and you think well... how do people on a lower income, how do they manage? ...I'm not saying we're on the breadline because we're not but I do have like towards the end of the month where you know it's like soup and bread for tea... it's like raking the flour out of the back of the cupboard to create something.

While the majority of the Edinburgh respondents relied on benefit payments as their main source of income, only one respondent from Toronto was in the same position. The respondents frequently regarded the amount of benefit they received as too low to buy the household's food shopping once their other bills were paid.

I say we could do with a lot more [money] that's why I'm trying to get out to work... I don't think it's liveable on. I mean if you take the full amount, the benefit comes to about over £100 a week, which is sufficient I could live off that but I'm paying back council tax. ... They take that off my book that's eight pounds... and I pay back a loan... so by the time all that comes off I'm down to like 72 or 82. I think it's 82, because I've got a £10 cheque that comes off the same day as my money. So I'm left with about £72 a week which isn't very much once you've paid your electric, your food, you've not really got much and the rest goes on day care, so apart from that [there is] next to nothing [left] (Trish, E).

The other respondents' income derived from employment, student loans or a partner's wage. The work undertaken by the mothers in Toronto was low paid and often part-time, which meant that they were reliant on subsidies towards rent and child-care rather than topping-up with benefits, such as Family Credit, which was available in Edinburgh. All of the respondents experienced periods where their income was insufficient to pay their basic bills and meet their weekly expenditure. The extent to which this occurred varied in relations to the households' circumstances.

5.2.3 Money Spent on Food

The respondents from both projects experienced constraints on the money available to spend on their food budget. They also had times when they needed to reduce the amount of money spent on purchasing food in order to pay outstanding bills and other expenses.

Do you ever have to cut back on the amount of money spent on purchasing food?

Not very often, but I know I have before. There has been a couple of periods, like right after you pay the bills sometimes, or something has come up like a lot of things all at once. You know like a couple of kids have a birthday at one time or something, so for a couple of weeks we'll eat more moderately like soup or macaroni... Yeah once in a while, I tend to forget it now as we're going through a better period but we have (Helen, T).

Do you ever have to cut back on the amount of money spent on purchasing food?

Lots of times when I think back over the years, I kind of have lived on baked beans and white bread and it's really [annoyed] me... because you know I just don't want that but oh yeah... lots of time ...

Has that been recently?

Funnily enough, it has been recently because I've had some debts to sort out. But what I tend to find [is], it varies even within a family. I think probably out of all of us I'm the one that would cut back more than the kids would, which is quite classic really (Sian, E).

Most of the respondents regularly spent a higher proportion of their income on food compared to the household average in their country. As outlined in Table 5.1, regardless of whether the Edinburgh respondents' income derived from a salary or benefits, they spent between 25-50 percent of their income on food shopping (this amount did not include take-away or meals eaten out, which occurred only on special occasions). Dowler reported that low-income households spent 26 percent of their income on food, whereas high-income households spent 15 percent of their income (Dowler 1998, p.61). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2002) found that the weekly average spend on food and non-alcoholic drinks between 1998-2001 was £59 in Scotland. It also reported that those in the bottom 20 percent of the income group in the UK, in the period 1999-2000, spent an average of £41.80 per week on food (ONS 2002, pp.109-112). This low figure was a similar amount to the Edinburgh respondents, where households with one or two adults and two children spent on average £40 a week on food. This amount was less than the average weekly expenditure on food and non-alcoholic drinks. In 2000-01, households with 2 adults and children spent on average £86.10 a week and households with one adult and children spent £50.90 (ONS 2002, p110).

In Edinburgh, the amount spent on food ranged from Jenni spending 20 pounds a week on food for herself and her child to over a hundred pounds for two households that had more than two adults, as well as young children. The majority of the households' income

came from benefits, which meant they did not feel that they had a lot of actual money available to spend on their food budget. On the other hand, a large proportion of their income did go on food. Large bills or costs were sometimes problematic, leading to some respondents borrowing money through the government run Social Fund. The Social Fund loans were paid back through automatic deductions from benefit payments – this resulted in two of the respondents experiencing some genuine difficulty paying back the debt and being able to feed their household sufficiently. For Jenni, spending 20 pounds a week on food was a struggle, but no more money could be spent due to paying back money to the Social Fund through her benefits. To buy enough food for twenty pounds involved a lot of time and effort to source affordable food. Jenni had cut back on what she bought to the ‘bare minimum’ and always avoided being frivolous. Those respondents with slightly higher incomes than the other respondents had a ‘medium income’ derived from one adult’s income. They were just as conscious of food prices and equally experienced times when money was restricted.

In Toronto, the amount of money spent weekly on food ranged from \$50-120 (£25-60). The lowest amount spent was \$50 a week by Amanda, who received benefits.

Do you ever have to cut back on how much money you spend on food?

Yeah, I have to, there are times when I have no money to buy what I really want... usually, at the end of the month (Amanda, T).

The Toronto respondents reported spending between 15 and 33 percent of their income on food. This was compared to the average Canadian spending 14 percent of their disposable income on food and low-income families spending a third of their income on food shopping (TFPC 1996). Canada has one of the lowest average food costs in the world, but despite this some people on low-incomes still experience problems in purchasing healthy foods (TFPC 1996). The Toronto respondents spent a lower proportion of their income on food, so that although Pam spent \$40 – 50 (£20-25) a week on food, which was just slightly more than Jenni in Edinburgh, this was a lower

proportion of her income. Pam did not feel as restricted in the food options available to her on that budget as Jenni did. Amanda, who was also on benefit, found that she had a tight budget to stick to and often ran out of money to purchase food by the end of the month. The students reported being likely to run into difficulty purchasing food at the end of term when their money was very low. This was due to receiving their loan per term rather than on a monthly basis.

The proportion of income spent on food was found to be lower in Toronto than in Edinburgh. In relative terms, the Canadian respondents' income levels would seem to have been slightly higher than in Scotland, or the cost of food was more affordable in Canada. The Toronto respondents only included one person who received benefits, whilst the other respondents' income derived from loans or paid employment. Although overall these incomes were low and respondents were careful about the money spent on their food budget, they did not appear to be 'scraping by' as much as in Edinburgh. The exception to this was Amanda, who was on benefits. It appeared that the income levels were slightly higher over all, with variation among both groups of respondents.

5.2.4 Summary

Overall, the two groups of respondents differed in the following two respects: where their income came from; and whether the respondents worked or stayed at home with their children. In comparison to the respondents in Toronto, the majority of the respondents in Edinburgh were unemployed and more likely to be at home during the day. This difference illustrates the type of respondent one might expect to find at the different projects due to their designs. As the co-op in Edinburgh was restricted to daytime opening hours, the users were more likely to be people who were at home during the day. They were subsequently able to take advantage of the facility and spend time to select the produce they needed. The GFB, on the other hand, was able to appeal to people who were unavailable during the day as the contents were pre-defined and the collection times were flexible. This allowed the GFB users to build the box into their lives and did not require them to take the time to choose the produce themselves. The

respondents from both projects were similar regarding the fact that most of them lived in some type of subsidised housing. Regardless of how the respondents obtained their income, and how much they had, they all, to varying extents, experienced limited food budgets and times when they had to make choices to cut back on their food budget. Although the respondents gave an amount and proportion of their income that was spent on food every week, it was clear that the actual amount fluctuated week to week. For most respondents, these fluctuations depended on their bills and expenses, as well as how close the period was to their next payment, whether it was fortnightly, monthly or quarterly.

5.3 The Initial Interest and Experience of the Projects

5.3.1 How the Respondents Heard about their Local Project

Talking to friends, neighbours and belonging to social groups were the main ways that the respondents first heard about the projects. In Edinburgh, prior to their local co-op opening, half of the respondents had previously visited another co-op that friends and relatives had used. Friends and neighbours recommendations had a large influence on the initial use of the projects.

How did you first hear about the food co-op?

One of my friends actually mentioned it. She'd seen a sign for it and to begin with we weren't actually very sure... who it was open to? Was it open to everybody in the community? ...[My] friend went up and she bought some stuff and said it was really good... and that's when I sort of had a look (Penny, E).

5.3.2 The Initial Appeal and First Impressions of the Initiatives

Part of the initial appeal of using the initiatives, especially in Edinburgh, was related to the low cost of the produce available from the projects. Some of the GFB respondents received a subsidy towards the cost of buying a box, which increased the appeal of receiving them.

The price, I couldnae believe the amount that I came out with... like two full carrier bags and I only spent £6... it was amazing, I was like "I'm no used to shopping like this" (Jane, E).

What interested you in getting the box?

Because it was free... through the university they actually gave us coupons, so they are giving us free boxes (Rachel, T).

While the cost of the produce was important for all of the respondents, other factors also contributed to the use of the projects. Some of the respondents' wider interests in using the projects included health matters, the local community, farming and environmental issues. The convenience of collecting the produce locally was also important in encouraging the respondents to use the projects, especially in Toronto. The majority of respondents were initially impressed by the available selection of produce in relation to the quality and wide variety provided. In particular, the co-op was noted for its friendly atmosphere, while the GFB was noted for the monthly surprise that it offered, as the respondents did not know the exact contents of the boxes.

I was really impressed by the produce. I suppose initially I was impressed by the atmosphere it just seemed really friendly. I mean the first thing that happened was I was offered a cup of coffee... And secondly, the produce, it was just really good quality and the prices were really good (Hannah, E).

...I liked it as soon as she said it, I guess it's like a surprise bag when you were kids, I like the idea of not knowing, just getting things that I might not pick up at the store. Like I've never bought beets but I cooked them both times I got them in the box... (Helen, T).

5.3.3 Use of the Projects

The Edinburgh interviewees were from two co-op locations, which had each been operating for less than a year. Each co-op opened two hours a week and had between 50-

100 users a week. The respondents usually spent between three and ten pounds a week on fresh produce from the co-ops.

How much do you normally spend when you go there?

On average I would say £7, I dinnae like to spend over £10... saying that I've spent three pounds and come away with a full carrier bag and £7 three full carrier bags (Trish, E).

The households in Toronto were from six different GFB drop-off sites that had all started within the last six months. These drop-off sites comprised between five and fifteen users depending on who ran the site and the reason for it operating. The drop-off sites were located at a variety of places including a church, co-op housing buildings and a university parent support group. The majority of respondents ordered the regular \$15 GFB (£7.50). Other people ordered the small \$10 GFB (£5) or the small \$20 organic box (£10). A few of the respondents had experimented with different boxes to see which one best fitted their needs.

Almost half of the GFB respondents received a subsidy towards the cost of their box from their drop-off site. This subsidy ranged from five dollars (from the church drop-off site) to the full \$15 (from the university to student parent support group that ran a drop-off site).

I guess we have had probably five or six [free boxes] and they have come at the perfect time, I have to tell you. They miraculously show up... when the [student loan] is running out and the money is tight...it's been really great (Laura, T).

The respondents were introduced to the projects mainly through word of mouth. The main interests in starting and continuing with the projects related to the ease of access to the projects, the cost of the produce, as well as some respondents being concerned about healthy eating.

5.4 Motivations and influences in the respondents' food choices

The three main interests that motivated respondents to use the projects were convenience, cost and health. Convenience was important as some respondents experienced problems in accessing decent shopping facilities. As previously mentioned, the respondents placed limits on their food budget, which meant being able to purchase affordable food from the projects was a great incentive to use them. In addition, most respondents were motivated to regularly have produce for their household to be able to consume a healthy diet. The majority of respondents held healthy eating aims, despite not always fulfilling them, particularly over a long-term period. These three interests were not the only factors determining the use of the projects. However, they were the main interests and exploring them briefly here will help to 'set the scene', for the following chapters. It will enable a wider understanding of the respondents' food choices and the problems they faced.

5.4.1 Convenience and Access

Most respondents found it difficult to access shops that offered a good selection of reasonably priced food. The shops and supermarkets that were nearby and accessible to the respondents often dictated the choice of affordable foods available to them. Less than half of all the respondents had access to a car for food shopping activities. This meant that the respondents relied heavily on the use of local shopping facilities, inconvenient buses or expensive taxis.

How much does the taxi cost to the shops?

\$5, \$10 both ways... It depends what day I have to go, if I go after work on Friday it will cost me more because there is a lot more traffic. If I go Saturday morning it's cheaper.

Do you think about the traffic before you go?

Yeah, I have to budget, I work on a budget, I live on a budget, oh my gosh do I live on a budget... (Rosie, T).

The majority of the Toronto respondents were in employment or at university during the day, which led to them being restricted in the time that they had available to go food shopping. The type of food shops that respondents used in Toronto were frequently chosen because of their proximity between work or university and their home.

[I used to use] Price Chopper, No Frills, they are close by. I walk, also keep in mind I live five minutes from [work] so this is my stomping ground... It's like a seven-minute walk or whatever, it's not like I have to lug it over the subway or anything like that (Pam, T).

Some of the Toronto respondents, especially the students who lived in the city centre, did not live close to any supermarkets that offered affordable food. In this situation the respondents often used local convenience shops that offered a limited choice of foods and were expensive. The other respondents used supermarkets. The supermarket chains, such as Loblaws and Dominion, sold a wide selection of goods but were infrequently used as they were considered by the respondents to be quite expensive. Price Chopper and No Frills were more commonly used supermarkets despite a limited choice of goods, as they were more affordable.

In Edinburgh, most of the respondents also experienced difficulty in accessing the more affordable supermarkets because they were often far away and needed transportation to reach them. Respondents usually had to travel outside their local area for their main groceries.

Some respondents in Edinburgh used small greengrocer shops that offered just low cost produce, while some Toronto respondents made an effort to access and use health food shops. The greengrocers and health food shops usually required more time and effort to access them than involved in using local facilities. The desire to use these 'specialist' shops reflected the fact that in Edinburgh the most affordable place to buy produce was from the greengrocers (although the quality was not always reliable) and in Toronto the

health food shops met some respondents' preferences for organic food for health or environmental concerns.

Most of the Edinburgh respondents spent more time travelling and finding the best deals in a number of shops in comparison to the Toronto respondents. This difference reflected the fact that most of the Edinburgh respondents had more time available for shopping. For instance, Sheena, a co-op user, had previously taken her child in a pushchair on an hour-long bus trip each way to get her shopping at Asda or a market in order to obtain the best affordable choices. For some respondents in Edinburgh, affordable choices were more important than the convenience and time involved. To an extent, they could be described as 'time rich' while being 'money poor'. In contrast, convenience was important and sometimes given greater priority than cost by the Toronto mothers, because of the restricted time they had available for shopping. These shopping arrangements were not always made in order to save money or time but rather out of practical reasons. These respondents were 'money poor' but also 'time poor'. A few Toronto respondents wished they had more time available in order to access more shops, whereas some of the Edinburgh respondents would have preferred a better income or transportation so that they could save time and use fewer shops.

I suppose at the end of the day if you get the stuff at a really low price it's okay [to use many shops] but I mean I would rather not, I would rather be doing something else.

Would you rather use one shop?

Yes, certainly I would do that if everything was in one place, what I wanted and cheap enough and all the rest of it and quality then that's where I would go (Jenni, E).

Jenni, like some of the other respondents, was without access to a car to allow her to use more affordable supermarkets. The frequency with which people could use just one main supermarket depended on what transport they had and the time available to them. Respondents with access to cars shopped less often and accessed fewer shops than those

who did not.

5.4.2 The Importance of Affordability

For many respondents, food choices were expensive, with special offers often dictating what food was bought.

I don't know, I must admit I like to see what is cheap and what's on special offer. 'Oh I'll have some of that', so that kind of determines what I'm going to have for the next few days. I just always want to have a half decent, you know, balanced diet, so just I'm always thinking what's most cost effective... (Sheena, E).

In Edinburgh, food was considered expensive, especially produce when compared with the cost of other foods. Prior to using the co-op, some respondents found it more difficult than others to purchase fresh produce because of the lack of availability of affordable produce. The cost alone does not explain the full appeal of the co-ops. However, for many respondents it was stated as their only initial reason for going there.

Yes [cost is] still important but using the co-op has made a big difference because it means I can afford to buy things that I consider to be for a healthy diet without paying the likes of the supermarket [prices]... (Penny, E).

Has receiving the box saved you any money?

Oh definitely. I feel better...I save money anyway because I am not spending it because I do buy, like if I didn't have the box I would be buying... onions and potatoes for sure because I eat them a lot... I mean I'm not spending the money on buying those (Elise, T, who received a fully subsidised GFB).

As found in other studies about low-income household's food expenditure (Craig & Dowler 1997; Riches 1997), most of the households did frequently cut back on their food budget because of bills, unexpected expenses, debt or being at the end of the period of their student loan or benefit. However, a few GFB respondents were unusual in that they prioritised purchasing food before paying other bills.

The bills just don't get paid. Like, if I ever get to the point where I am figuring out what is more important, rent and food come first and it's just the other bills last, fine. The food, the roof and the clothes and our health those are my spending priorities (Pam, T).

The cost of the produce at the projects proved a considerable motivation for the respondents in starting and then continuing to use them. Prior to using the projects some of these respondents wanted access to more affordable produce, as demonstrated by their effort to buy produce from affordable but low quality greengrocers in Edinburgh. To an extent, the projects enabled many respondents to work towards their purchasing and eating aims.

5.4.3 Health interests

All of the respondents, to varying degrees, talked about the importance of health in relation to food consumption. The majority of respondents' interests in healthy eating related to their children's health. When talking about preparing food, mothers emphasised that they aimed to provide vegetables with every main meal. Most respondents, such as Jo and Sian, found that through having children, their interest in eating more nutritious food had developed.

... I try and make sure that the meals have got goodness in them and certainly try to make sure she has some protein, iron and green vegetable disguised amongst all the stuff... I try and make sure she has a good something to eat at least once a day, so it is more important than before I had her (Jo, E).

It just becomes a point where you want to go somewhere where [processed foods] don't exist which is partly why I ended up going down the organic food route because I was never that interested in it before I had the kids. I mean yeah I would like to have a relatively healthy diet but you know, when you're a teenager you don't think that much about it... (Sian, E).

A few respondents developed their health interests over the years and adapted to being extremely health conscious about their households' diets. Many of these respondents wanted their children to grow up with good eating habits but had difficulty in following

these aims when balancing them with their food budget. John and Tania consciously tried to bring about a change in food consumption within the household.

John: Oh [health has] got a lot to do with [what we eat]. You know, for both of us, we came from backgrounds where there was a lot more meat being eaten. That has been reduced by probably 75 percent in my case...

Tania: Yeah when I was growing up we used to eat a lot of meat in South America...Now we eat meat about twice a week.

Interviewer: Was this change a conscious decision?

John: Yeah, we've been together for four years and it has always been a factor for us. It is a part of our diet because we both like it and there is nothing wrong with having meat but not to the extent that we had before. The other thing is that we make sure that we have a lot of fruits and vegetables here so that is now part of our diet, now it is just second nature and that had to be a conscious thing for me to do...

A few respondents from each project were not only interested in eating enough produce, but also held wider concerns about organic produce and supporting small-scale farmers.

If you were to summarise what would you say the main influences are when purchasing food?

Nutrition, food is important because I like nutritious food... I don't just like any food. It's like your [digestive] system, when you put [bad] food in your system then you get allergies... so I like organic stuff because when I eat organic stuff it's like I can feel how it reacts [well] in my system than when you eat commercial [produce] (Amanda, T).

...I like the idea of getting the produce from Ontario farmers and keeping them employed. It's good for the economy, it's good for the farmers. I liked the fact that it was fresh and affordable and em I wanted to support the programme. It's a good programme... (John, T).

Elise and Laura were unconcerned about always making sure their household ate healthy food because they already ate a lot of produce and cooked in healthy ways.

[Health is not too important]...because I'm pretty sure that I eat healthily like I already eat a lot of foods that are good for you, I don't eat a lot of like greasy, fatty stuff... I'm pretty comfortable with how we are eating (Elise, T).

The majority of respondents were therefore motivated to use the CFIs in order to obtain produce as a way of working towards their aims of consuming enough produce to be healthy. More Toronto respondents were concerned about healthy eating over cost than Edinburgh respondents who balanced their health interests with cost concerns. This motivation and interest in healthy eating, however, did not mean that everyone was eating what would be considered a healthy diet or the recommended five portions of produce a day. In some cases the respondents held short-term health aims. For instance, Rosie's interest in eating more produce was only for the period of her pregnancy. Some respondents had problems in being able to either maintain their healthy eating aims or to achieve them over a long-term period.

...So is health quite important?

...Yeah, but it's really difficult with children because they're just horrible people. I think sometimes with children it's convenience as well because you're just so busy. And you can't em, cook as much as you'd like in the sense that, if something can be just put in the oven and forgotten about it's a lot easier, 'cause they'll just come in and try and annoy you, if you're trying to do things (Sarah, E).

The initiatives had therefore attracted users who had health motivations and to an extent an awareness of what foods they wanted to eat for good health, even if they did not already achieve this. The respondents had held these health aims for different lengths of time. Only a few households did not regularly include vegetables with their main meals. The other households included vegetables either consciously for nutritional reasons or because they liked produce and that was a way of life for them. Some respondents spoke about how they should have five portions of produce a day, although they were often unsure of what a portion should be.

...I can never work out [how many servings we eat a day]. You know, if you have pasta with three or four vegetables in it does that count as four servings or is that one? I never know, I think some days we do hit five [portions], maybe go over if you count it in those terms... I honestly don't know... we don't eat five a day each [per day] but then some days it will be over [five servings] (Kate, E).

5.5 Summary

These three motivational factors; convenience, cost and health emerged from the initial data as the most important in influencing the initial use of the projects. These factors will be examined in more depth in the following chapters. The purpose of this chapter has been to give an understanding of the experience and interests of the respondents, highlighting some similarities and differences between the groups. Both projects were a means for the home managers to feed their households on a restricted budget, while balancing it with any healthy eating aims that they held. Prior to using the projects, some of the respondents already held some motivation towards purchasing affordable and healthy food but the opportunity was not always there. Opportunities to buy produce were frequently dictated by convenience and the respondents' access to local shops and the special offers available within them. Cost, convenience and health issues remained the main but not the only reasons for people beginning to use the projects. The following chapters will expand upon these primary and wider motivations.

Chapter 6 Shopping Patterns

6.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the shopping patterns of the respondents in the context of the shops that they used and the food available within these shops. The chapter explores the respondents' experiences of trying to balance their cost, health and convenience preferences, as outlined in the previous chapter. It then explores how using the projects became part of their shopping routines and influenced their food choices. The focus of the chapter is on the choices that the respondents faced. These choices relate to the availability of foods within shops and the respondents' ability to buy food that reflected their preferences.

The chapter is spilt into three sections:

- Part 1 covers shopping patterns and the facilities that the respondents used.
- Part 2 explores the respondents' food choices within the facilities used.
- Part 3 considers how the use of the projects was incorporated into the respondents' shopping habits based on the findings from Parts 1 and 2.

6.2. Access to Food Shopping Facilities

The shops that the respondents used reflected their circumstances and food preferences. The respondents' circumstances related to the time and money they had available and whether they were able to travel to where the shops were located. When looking at the shops that the respondents used, four shopping patterns emerged that reflected the influence of three factors: the cost of food, the time taken to go to the shops and the distance travelled by the respondents. Table 6.1 outlines the four identified shopping patterns:

- Pattern I: food costs low through extensive distance and abundant time
- Pattern II: food costs low, involved limited distance and reduced time
- Pattern III: food costs high, involved limited distance and reduced time
- Pattern IV: food costs high, with extensive distance and abundant time required

The respondents in the study did not experience the other four possible patterns and these will not therefore be discussed further.

Table 6.1 The Respondents’ shopping circumstances

		Time			
		Reduced		Abundant	
		Limited Distance	Extensive Distance	Limited Distance	Extensive Distance
Cost	Low	II √			I √
	High	III √			IV √

In Table 6.1, the cost terms ‘Low’ and ‘High’ are based upon the respondents’ opinions of the food prices on offer at the places where they shopped compared with other shopping facilities. The breakdown of distance into ‘Limited’ and ‘Extensive’ was chosen to reflect the complexity involved in completing a shopping trip. The distance travelled takes into consideration the mode of transport available, as well as the actual distance covered. For instance, the distance travelled could be extensive through using lots of local shops that required the respondents to cover much distance by foot, as well as covering respondents who travelled far to a single supermarket by car or public transport. The time scales ‘Reduced’ and ‘Abundant’ take into account both the proportion of the respondents’ day/week spent shopping and secondly the time required for shopping. The time spent shopping could be reduced due to respondent having less time available to shop or by being able to use local shopping facilities, thereby reducing

the need to spend as much time shopping. Respondents with abundant time could choose or feel it was necessary to spend a lot of time shopping to increase their choice of foods. The factors of cost, time and distance are all interrelated and were balanced by the respondents in relation to their immediate priority of value for money, convenience or health. For example, if convenience becomes important as the time available is reduced, there may be cost implications, as the respondent can no longer travel to affordable shops. Similarly, the reverse is true: if time is increased, the respondent may choose or be able to travel and cover more distance in order to achieve lower costs.

This section examines the interdependency of the three areas (cost, time and travel) within the respondents’ use of shopping facilities for the majority of their food shopping. It looks at the choice of shopping facilities available to the respondents and how this was adjusted to fit their needs. The eleven co-op and ten GFB respondents followed four main patterns of shopping, as shown in Table 6.2, which will now be explored in order to understand the priorities and choices that the respondents made when accessing shops to purchase their food. This section aims to reflect the issues and experiences of the respondents when purchasing the majority of the food for their household.

Table 6.2 The number of respondents within each shopping pattern

	Co-op respondents		GFB respondents	
Shopping Pattern	Initial Interview	Second Interview	Initial Interview	Second Interview
I.i	9	7	2	2
I.ii	2	2	3	2
II	-	1	2	2
III	-	1	3	4
IV (in addition to other patterns)	-	-	4	4

6.2.1 Shopping Pattern I: Cost as a Priority

For the respondents in this group, keeping food costs low was a major priority, but problematic, as they did not live close to low-cost shopping facilities. These respondents aimed to keep food costs low through covering an extensive distance and taking the time to purchase low priced food within the facilities available to them. Initially, all of the co-op respondents and just over half of the GFB respondents shopped with the main aim of keeping the cost of purchasing food low, in line with their income.

Within this group the respondents split into two sub-groups, both of which involved shopping in ways that were time consuming and involved a lot of travelling. The first sub-group comprised of initially nine co-op respondents and two GFB respondents. They took the time to walk to many nearby shops in order to maximise the choice and opportunity to buy the best affordable deals from each shop. The second sub-group consisted of three GFB respondents and two co-op respondents, who mainly took the time to travel, by car or bus, to a distant supermarket that offered low-priced foods. Both groups were shopping in ways that prioritised keeping food costs low within their budget and food preferences, which required them to spend a large amount of time shopping. The main difference that influenced the respondents of the two sub-groups was their access to transport and different local shopping facilities.

Sub-Group I.i: Use of Many Local Facilities

Most co-op respondents (nine out of eleven) and only two GFB respondents regularly used many shops within walking distance of their home and daily activities. Without good access to transport to reach facilities further away, the use of many shops maximised the choice of food available locally, as respondents could buy the best deals from each place.

Unfortunately I've been forced to shop at Safeways in the Saint James Centre. I mean, as I said before, the choice of shops that we have...as far as supermarkets are concerned, are hopeless really... I'll go to the shop up the road there...it's tiny but it has cheap stuff... You hang around outside and

wait for people to come out then dash in, it's hopeless but it's quite reasonable... I will go to different shops (Jenni, E).

A few co-op respondents were able to combine this method of shopping with the occasional use of more distant supermarkets when possible, to further maximise the affordable choices available to them, so that they used different shops both near and far. This allowed them access to a wider selection of affordable foods.

This way of shopping, using many different shops, required knowledge about where to look for good deals. Using a variety of different shops was time-consuming and did not always guarantee good deals compared to using more distant, large supermarkets. This meant that despite respondents spending a lot of time shopping, they were not always satisfied with the choices available to them regarding the range, cost or quality of food.

The respondents felt that they usually had enough time available to shop, with only two of the respondents having work commitments. The only GFB respondents in this subgroup, Pam and Helen, had more time available than previously, resulting in both of them enjoying taking more time to shop for their groceries.

...I'll do shopping every two or three days. If I was working I would just do it once a week and I would probably shop at LobLaws, which is more expensive but has a bigger selection. But because I stay at home I have the time [to shop]... I like shopping...especially this year because I have more time than ever because all of my kids are in school full time... I walk over with a friend and we just hang out for an hour, so it is almost a social thing (Helen, T).

One way that the respondents reduced the time it took to shop was to extend the number of times they went shopping in order to spread the task out over the week. This way only a small amount of time was required each day to shop. Shopping could therefore be fitted in between other daily activities, such as collecting the children from school, or as a social activity with friends. Sarah's husband, who bought most of the household's shopping, used different supermarkets almost on a daily basis. He shopped frequently,

firstly, so that he could buy quantities of food that he was able to carry home, and secondly, because it was a way of buying the best offers from a selection of places, as his work took him to different areas of the city. Some respondents frequently changed which shops they used in order to fit in with their changing plans, as well as to find the best deals. When the time available for shopping was restricted, this often resulted in the use of fewer shops and therefore respondents were faced with a limited selection of affordable foods. For instance, Trish started shopping at the local convenience shop rather than more distant shops in order to save time after returning to full-time employment

Since starting your new job, has the food that you purchase changed?

Oh it's changed immensely. Very rarely there is fruit in the house now, as I buy it on a daily basis. Salads and that – it's all reduced completely because of the time factor... There are not enough fresh things in the house... I don't have time to go out and replace it (Trish, E).

While the respondents had the time available, it did not always mean that they preferred using their time to shop more than the other respondents did. For some respondents, such as Helen, obtaining the best deals for their money was an enjoyable task while for others, such as Jenni who had a limited income due to paying back debts, it was a matter of necessity, to enable them to stay within their food budget. This need to use lots of local shops due to a lack of affordable foods from one shop reflected a lack of choice and control over what foods could be easily purchased. "I use Safeway, ken, 'cause where else can you go?" Sheena said in despair. Some co-op respondents felt 'forced' to shop at places that did not meet their preferences or budget.

Sub-Group I.ii: Use of Distant Supermarkets

To reduce the overall cost of shopping three GFB respondents and two co-op respondents travelled relatively far in order to use supermarkets that offered a wide selection of affordable foods. Respondents could do the majority of their shopping in one place, where they could stock up and buy items in bulk quantities. Shopping was

done either once a week or fortnightly and then basic food items were topped-up from local shops. The three GFB respondents felt time restricted due to their work commitments. They also had access to a car or used buses or taxis to take their shopping home. Relying on taxis was expensive, but allowed the respondents to reduce the number of times they went shopping, as they could take large quantities of shopping home. Using public transport to take home large quantities of shopping was often impractical. In one particular case, Sheena no longer had access to a car for her shopping trips, which meant she adapted to using many closer facilities rather than travelling to more affordable shops by bus, as she had a child in a pram and shopping to carry.

...I would prefer to go to Asda every week but it's just not going to happen... it's not on my doorstep... I dinnae get to go to the cheaper shops... I do like Asda and Aldi, they are dirt-cheap... but I would have to take the bus for up to an hour (Sheena, E).

Jane, on the other hand, took the time to go by bus to a supermarket that was further away than two other main supermarkets in order to have a choice of more affordable foods and to take advantage of a free home delivery service. She suffered from health problems, which meant she had to avoid carrying heavy groceries.

... I could go to Safeway's or Tescos [as they are closer] but I would have to carry it back. So I go to Iceland, I get it and they deliver it later on, right to the door and I just need to put it away, which is a lot easier (Jane, E).

The respondents required transport and the time to travel to the supermarket, as well as the time to go around it and select their groceries. Shopping once per week or fortnightly could be time consuming but allowed the respondents to shop less frequently compared to people who used many shops and spent more time shopping throughout the week.

Although most of these respondents only used local shops to top-up on basic foods, the large supermarkets did not always cater for all of their food preferences. For instance, prior to using the co-op, Penny bought only a limited amount of produce from the

supermarket because of the high prices charged. The GFB respondents within this group tried to balance using the more affordable supermarkets that offered a limited selection of foods, with the more expensive supermarkets that had a wider selection of foods. Despite one supermarket not providing for all of the respondents' preferences of low cost food and a wide selection of goods, it was more convenient than shopping at a variety of places: an option that many of the respondents felt unable to pursue because of their work commitments.

6.2.2 Shopping Pattern II: Good Access to Nearby Affordable Shopping Facilities

Only two GFB respondents were able to take advantage of living or working close to a supermarket that offered a wide selection of food. They could buy food at low prices without travelling far to do this and thereby saved time. However, the respondents did sometimes experience a limited selection of food in a similar way to the respondents mentioned above, who only regularly used one supermarket.

In Edinburgh, Sian experienced a change in her circumstances between her first and second interview. This change resulted in a reduction in the time available to use her regular range of shops. As a result she began to use a supermarket nearby on her way home from work, as this was practical and time saving, despite being quite expensive. She discovered that shopping late in the evening had the advantage that the supermarket had many fresh items of food reduced in price. She then consciously chose to shop late in the evenings in order to buy affordable healthy foods.

...Tesco's will chuck their [fruit and vegetables] out cheap towards that time of day when I get back... If you are prepared to go shopping late, at seven or eight... then you can pick it up as cheap as you can at the co-op, perhaps not predictably... You couldn't think 'oh well I'll have broccoli or carrots', you would have to see what was in the... reduction bin but on the whole that's what I do... go to the supermarket in the evening specifically, because it will be cheap... So I think that is probably just as much a strategy as deciding to go to a food co-op because it is almost saying food has become really... expensive and in some cases prohibitively so (Sian, E).

Sian had limited control over what foods she could buy at reduced prices and needed the knowledge and skills to utilise a wide range of fresh foods. Shopping like this offered Sian affordable healthy food choices while also being time saving. However, Sian was required to shop in the evening in order to purchase food at reduced prices.

6.2.3 Shopping Pattern III: Convenience as a Priority

For some respondents convenience dominated over other food preferences, such as using health food shops and keeping costs low. Throughout the research, the three student GFB respondents had a lack of good shopping facilities close to them and were short of time to travel to other shops. They shopped almost daily at Rabba, a local convenience shop, on their way home from university and from collecting their children. The shop was expensive, small and offered a limited selection of groceries.

By the second period of the research one more GFB respondent and one co-op respondent experienced a change in their circumstances so that they also no longer had the time to shop around or travel far to a decent supermarket. They used close-by convenience shops, as there were no local affordable alternative shops. The time available to Rosie, a GFB respondent, for shopping was reduced after the birth of her child. Trish, a co-op user, had started back to full-time employment and began to frequently rely on the local convenience shop for her shopping, she faced similar shopping options to these GFB respondents. For all of these five respondents it meant that although keeping costs low was important convenience shops were mostly used, as they were easy to access and fitted in with the respondents' routine and circumstances.

Where did you buy your fruit and vegetables from before the GFB?

Rabba or there is one across the street... They are both expensive but I think if I had to go to a different store, I don't have a car, so including my time and the cost of a cab I think that it would add up to just as much if not more. It's a bit expensive but then you're paying for the convenience...(Rachel, T).

...It's probably not the cheapest way to do it [using Rabba] but I haven't had time at all this term... Just about every day, like on the way home I just grab...anything I need... (Elise, T).

The respondents sacrificed cost in order to use the available convenient shops, as this was a priority to them. At that time in the respondents' lives, they did not feel that they had a choice in the way they shopped. The limited time available to them for shopping had a direct effect on the shops they could use without travelling far. These respondents intended to use other shops further afield when they had more time available.

6.2.4 Shopping Pattern IV: Health Food Shops

All of the respondents at the time of the interviews followed one of the three shopping patterns mentioned above. Occasionally respondents moved from one shopping pattern to another as their circumstances changed, such as Trish and Rosie moving from pattern I to pattern III over the interview period. On top of these three different patterns, four GFB respondents sometimes incorporated the use of health food shops into their regular routine. These shops were considered to be expensive but reflected the respondents' beliefs or health preferences. None of the respondents lived close to the health food shops that they used. Using the health food shops involved the respondents travelling extensive distances, taking a lot of time to get to them and involved high costs, which meant that the respondents restricted the frequency and regularity with which they were used.

... I have to take the train to the health food store... [If] I'm near a health food store and I have some money I will definitely go in and check it out to see what they have... I love the health food store. So, I'll go in and see if they have something that I can afford at the time (Amanda, T, who used health food shops whenever possible).

Two co-op respondents wanted to use health food shops, but continued to give priority to supermarkets instead, as they felt unable to justify the use of health food shops because of the high costs involved. Cost remained an important influence on where people shopped, despite any preferences to prioritise the use of health food shops.

6.3 Shopping Choices within the Shops Used

The last section highlighted the shopping patterns of the respondents with regard to the shops that they used and why they chose these shops. This part of the chapter looks at the respondents' experiences of using these shops available to them and the respondents' ability within these facilities to purchase their food preferences. The respondents used a range of outlets, from small local shops to larger supermarkets. At each facility the respondents experienced different choices in the range of foods for sale and the prices charged. Some respondents felt that they shopped in a different manner depending on which shop they were in because of the atmosphere and selection of food on sale. For instance, shopping could be stressful on a limited budget due to the high prices of food in some facilities. This led to some respondents trying to relentlessly adhere to their shopping list and to keep a running total of how much they were spending.

6.3.1 Small Convenience Shops

The convenience shops used in Edinburgh and Toronto offered a limited selection of foods at expensive prices. They usually stocked a small selection of produce, snack-foods and basic food items. The shops rarely had special offers or reduced food items. When shopping in these facilities in both Edinburgh and Toronto, the respondents often limited what they bought in one visit due to an awareness of the high prices charged or based on the money they had in their purse at that time.

The Edinburgh respondents only used their local convenience shop for basic foods that they had run short of, with only Trish sometimes using them as her main source of shopping. Respondents tried to avoid purchasing their produce from the convenience shops because the selection was limited, of poor quality and not perceived to be value for money. Hannah's comments about using her local shops were typical of those expressed by the other Edinburgh respondents.

The smaller shops I tend to go to if I just need something like an onion... I don't do a massive shop there, [just] things I run out of ... They don't have any variety across the road - It's just milk [I buy]... I have to be desperate [to buy more] (Hannah, E).

The convenience shops that the Toronto respondents used were slightly larger than those used in Edinburgh and had a wider variety of foods, yet were still limited. Despite the expensive prices and limited selection of food, some Toronto respondents regularly used them as their main shopping facility, while other respondents used them in a similar manner to the Edinburgh respondents. The respondents who used convenience shops for most of their food needs did not like to admit to themselves how much money they actually spent on their shopping. They knew they were paying expensive prices, but did not have control over this due to being unable to access other facilities and therefore they did not have a set budget. Rather than buying all of their shopping at one time it was typical for these respondents to buy a small amount of groceries at each visit thereby not knowing how much money they spent on food each week.

I think what is preventing me from doing a big shop around here is that the [convenience stores] here are expensive. It's almost like I'm fooling myself by buying like one or two items that I am eating every evening because I don't think I'm spending as much, but really I am probably spending a lot more by not getting the big grocery shopping [from the supermarket] (Elise, T).

Some respondents kept a running total of the cost of what they were purchasing in relation to the money available in their purse rather than being based on an overall food budget, as the food needed to be bought, as Rachel explained;

...Sometimes I add up in my head - if I have like 4 dollars in my purse and that's the last thing until the end of the week. But if I know I have more I just think well I need these things... I know I am on a budget... I'm not buying lobster it is just like bacon and whatever (Rachel, T).

The selection of produce available within the Toronto convenience shops was considered to be of reasonable quality but limited in choice. The three respondents who purchased the majority of their shopping from nearby convenience shops therefore

experienced restricted choices in the produce they could afford to purchase and thus consume.

The Toronto respondents in shopping pattern III 'made-do' with the selection of food available at convenience shops, as they were the only accessible facilities available to them, whereas in Edinburgh the respondents used the shops on a more infrequent basis for food items that they had run out of. The convenience shops served the purpose of providing the respondents with a selection of food close to their home when they were unable to go elsewhere. However, the selection on offer was not ideal for helping respondents to gain control by buying food that was in line with their price range as well as their taste and health preferences, as the selection of food was limited and often expensive. Being restricted to using only convenience shops would impact on the type of food/diet that could be consumed.

6.3.2 Small Specialist Shops - Toronto

Other small shops used by some of the Toronto respondents were health food shops, as illustrated in pattern IV. These were not used on a regular basis due mainly to the cost of the food compared to supermarket prices, among other practical factors as referred to in part one. Purchasing food from health food shops allowed the respondents a means to purchase organic or 'wholesome'/'healthy' food. The respondents could not afford to purchase all of their shopping from the health food shops so choices had to be made about what constituted value for money.

...I'm getting into organic foods but you know it's a little expensive. Then you can't put a price on your health either... So I usually have to reason like that, think well it might get a little bit expensive but you're paying for quality stuff without the chemicals. So, I mean make the choice, what is your health worth? Disease I say is dis-ease, so you have to make the choice (Cath, T).

Respondents were more likely to purchase unusual items of food from health food shops that were unavailable from elsewhere and items that were deemed 'value for money' when their price and 'health/organic' benefit was taken into account and compared to

buying it from a supermarket. For instance, organic bread or dry foods, such as rice and pulses, were considered value for money, as they were grown without chemicals and only slightly more expensive than conventional prices. However, organic produce was considered too expensive compared with conventional produce, which meant it was rarely purchased despite respondents' preferences for it. Often respondents spent what money they could within these shops.

[I purchase food from] the health food stores and more [often I buy from] the supermarket because, I mean, I can't afford organic like all the time... (Amanda, T).

The prices are comparable, depending on what you want... usually the bulk stuff... bins of flour and dried figs...and different things like that (Cath, T).

Choices had to be made with regard to which products were worth spending more money on at the health food shop rather than from elsewhere. Some respondents employed conscious strategies to ensure they had money available to spend in health food shops, such as buying low priced basic food items from inexpensive supermarkets.

...I buy more organic grains and stuff (from the health food store)... You are spending more if you go to the health food store... But I try to balance it and I cut out other things... It makes sense to me to live healthier... (Viv, T).

The use of health food shops gave some respondents a wide selection of goods within their preferences for organic, health or more unusual items of food. However, using the health food shops required the respondents to balance these costly preferences with cost-saving food items from elsewhere.

6.3.3 Small Specialist Shops - Edinburgh

Some Edinburgh respondents regularly used small greengrocer shops that either sold only or mainly fresh produce. These shops allowed respondents to purchase produce at a more affordable price than the supermarkets charged, although the quality was sometimes dubious. While the greengrocer offered a wide range of affordable produce, they were small shops that were always busy. An effort was required to carefully check

each item's quality to see whether it was worth buying. Therefore, the wide range of produce on sale was often reduced once the respondents judged whether the quality was suitable in relation to value for money and when they wanted to use and consume the produce. There was no point in buying something that would not last more than a couple of days if it was not going to be used before then.

I used to go in [the greengrocer, but] I just got fed up 'cause some of the stuff. He didn't take the bad stuff out you know? I didn't fancy it that much... (Jenni, E).

I just don't get the time at the moment to spend picking stuff out in the shop. Looking at apples and seeing if they are good or not (Trish, E).

The shops' more positive qualities were that they could be relied on to sell produce at lower prices than the supermarkets, especially for certain items of fruit. When the respondents had time they would sacrifice quality and were flexible about what they would buy from these shops in order to have a selection of produce within their budget.

6.3.4 The Supermarkets – Edinburgh and Toronto

The supermarkets used in Toronto and Edinburgh ranged in size, location and the prices they charged, although they were all larger and more affordable than the convenience shops. In one way, the supermarkets allowed the respondents a choice of foods not available from elsewhere. The supermarkets' large size and low prices meant that there was a wide selection of affordable food. However in another way, due to the way the supermarkets sold and packaged some foods, as well as the respondents' limited budgets, the actual choice of food that the respondents could purchase was restricted and led to them relying heavily on supermarket special offers. An element of choice was therefore taken away as the supermarkets to an extent dictated what respondents bought through the special offers and packaging they provided.

Food Budgets

The majority of respondents were committed to keeping their food costs to as low a level as possible, while bearing in mind their household's taste and health preferences. Some respondents had set food budgets, which they adhered to, while others based their financial boundary on the money within their purse/wallet or remained aware that they always had to keep their food costs low. Respondents developed strategies to obtain the best value within the supermarkets. When short of money, most of the respondents would reduce their food bill by purchasing the cheapest food and only certain items of food. Food was a flexible item to reduce when necessary, compared with other household expenses.

... If I have to go to Tescos... I will just limit it because you dinnae know until you get to the till their prices...(Trish, E).

...I find it very hard to save, what tends to happen is that when I get the bills in we sort of have a lean time for a couple of weeks so I can cover it (Jo, E).

Keeping to budget involved some respondents always adding up the cost of what they were buying as they went along the aisles. Often respondents wrote a shopping list, which was a tool to keep them within their budget, as much as to remind them what to buy. Many respondents were always conscious of not purchasing too many groceries to ensure they kept within their budget, as it was such an important issue to them.

In contrast, as highlighted in chapter 5, a minority of GFB respondents selected food from the supermarkets without regard for the cost despite any budget constraints they experienced. When short of money they restricted the amount as opposed to the type of food that they bought. Purchasing certain foods for health or taste preferences remained a priority.

We go for what we eat, so if there is a particular brand name it may be more expensive than the other one but nobody is going to eat the other one, I can tell you that. ...Price is a factor in a lot of areas but beyond not having enough money in my pocket...it influences how many items I buy and not what I buy (Laura, T).

John did not place a limit on how much he spent on groceries, as he believed he only bought basic foods anyway. On the other hand, his wife, Tania, watched the budget as she did half of the shopping and was always aware of the cost of items of food and would not buy any food items that she deemed too expensive. The other respondents who placed no conscious boundaries on their food budget did encounter budgetary problems similar to the other respondents and some did have to employ cost-saving strategies. For instance, while Laura purchased brand-named foods, at the end of every payment period she would have no money left and had to be resourceful with the food left in her cupboard or from her parents' garden.

Other Low Cost Strategies

Other strategies to stay within budget included the use of supermarkets that offered the lowest prices, such as Iceland in Edinburgh and Price Chopper in Toronto. The affordable supermarkets kept the respondents' food budgets low but did not offer a wide selection of food. Some respondents felt the limited selection had the advantage of taking away the temptation of buying more expensive foods, although sometimes they did prefer to have a wider selection of food. This resulted in Viv and Helen in Toronto balancing out cost and availability by occasionally using the expensive supermarkets that offered a wider selection of food for sale.

I tend to shop where things are less expensive and that's just because [we rely on] one income and so many people around here eating...I'm just cheap, but I'm definitely conscious of it... I won't buy certain things unless they are on sale... On day-to-day things I'll shop in sales and I'll try to minimise [the expense]... I'll shop at Price Chopper even though they don't have everything and it's more inconvenient that way... just because it's cheaper (Helen, T).

Viv regularly used Price Chopper for her shopping, although once in a while, depending on her finances or whether it was a special occasion, she used a more expensive supermarket where she would stock up on items of food that were not available at her regular supermarket.

Opportunity Purchasing

As a strategy to save money, all respondents purchased special offers and reduced-price items that the supermarkets offered. These were seen as ‘a bargain’ or offering value for money. Most special offers involved buying items in certain forms of packaging or in bulk, such as three items for the price of two or buy one get one free. This meant respondents had to be flexible about what they were going to buy, to benefit from the offers. Penny would make a meal plan for the week before going shopping but the exact meat and produce to be bought depended upon what was on special offer at the time. These promotions were more widespread and dictated a larger amount of what foods were bought in Edinburgh than in Toronto. As respondents were restricted in the amount of money they could spend, buying special offers reduced the variety of groceries they could purchase because it involved purchasing large quantities of the item on offer and restricting the money available for other foods. Produce on special offer was often pre-packed, such as only selling items of fruit by the kilo, which restricted respondents from picking out their own produce and choosing the quantity that they preferred.

...It's all right [the supermarket] ...if you are getting everything that is on special offer or buy one get one free or half price – fine. I wouldnae dream of going there and paying full price for anything, it's too bloody dear... (Sheena, E).

You've got to look for the sales and collect your coupons, whatever, be frugal with your budget you know (Cath, T).

Some respondents liked finding special offers to make their money last longer, while other people thought of it as a necessity and would have preferred not to have to make the effort to look for the best offers. The respondents' control over food choices was therefore to varying extents dependent on the supermarkets' promotions. This highlights the ‘opportunistic purchasers’ who appear to be driven to get value for money and the best deals. This requires a lot of time to search for items, and forward thinking as the products bought will dictate the diet for the next few days or week.

Substitute Purchasing

Strategies were employed to balance food costs with consideration to health preferences, sometimes to the detriment of taste, while other respondents bought some foods that were filling and cheap rather than foods that reflected their taste and health preferences.

In Edinburgh, produce in supermarkets was considered to be expensive, compared with the low prices of other foods. As a strategy to reduce the cost of buying fruit and vegetables some co-op respondents purchased frozen and canned items of produce, despite their households' objections to the taste and their own preference for fresh and healthy options.

...I buy canned things as well...which is not particularly great for you, but it fills you up. But if there is something else, vegetables rather than that, that we can have with it I will cook that. ... I feel that the fresh fruit and vegetables are best. The tinned stuff is more for convenience and... because of the cost of it (Jenni, E).

I was probably buying more tinned veg and frozen veg [before using the co-op] but not necessarily the same quantity, because my husband isn't so fond of frozen veg as he is of fresh. And there are certain things that he just doesn't like the taste of if they've been frozen but he'll eat them if they're fresh vegetables (Penny, E).

In Toronto, produce was not singled out as being costly in comparison to other groceries, unless it was organic. As produce was not singled out as being expensive it was unusual for the GFB respondents to purchase canned or frozen produce to save money; it was more likely to be bought for taste preferences, convenience and a way of storing food for leaner times.

Canned vegetables that will be the back up... corn, peas, carrots... It's not very good I'd rather not do it but it's there and it's a way of storing vegetables in our house... It's probably more convenience because if anything if I had one dollar left I would find a way to buy real fruit, instead of buying canned fruit... I would rather have the fresh stuff for nutrition purposes and just personal taste... (Laura, T).

6.4 Changes from using the projects

This section covers how participating in the projects changed respondents' shopping patterns (in relation to cost, time and distance). It considers the choice of food available to the respondents in relation to using the project and how some respondents began to adapt their shopping habits to incorporate the projects into their shopping routine.

6.4.1 Using the Projects in Relation to the Shopping Patterns

In relation to the shopping patterns that the respondents undertook, using the projects fell under shopping pattern II. The projects offered affordable low cost produce and were conveniently located near the respondents, which required a minimum amount of time to use them, although some co-op respondents liked to take their time when at their co-op. For the majority of respondents, the produce from the projects was collected from a convenient local area. However, the convenience of being locally available was sometimes off set by the way a volunteer ran their drop-off site in Toronto or in the way that the co-ops operated in Edinburgh.

The GFB

The GFB offered convenience, saving the need to shop for produce elsewhere. The process of ordering, paying for and collecting the box was usually considered straightforward.

...It is great, I think it is convenient. You cannot under-estimate convenient in this world. It's a huge factor in how I think, so it's a godsend (Cath, T).

Each drop-off sites volunteer co-ordinator was usually flexible about any GFB arrangements. The convenience, along with ease of ordering, meant some respondents quickly established a routine of ordering and receiving the box and thereby becoming more committed to ordering it on a regular basis, as they incorporated it into their regular shopping routine.

I bring the box on one Wednesday then I'll get the box the next Wednesday. I pay for the box one week in advance. So every Wednesday I'm either dropping off the box or getting it (Helen, T, easily adapted to the routine of ordering her GFB).

However, the three GFB student respondents did not regularly receive the vouchers that entitled them to free boxes from their co-ordinator. This affected the frequency with which they could order a GFB and the extent to which it became part of their regular shopping routine.

It's fine picking it up; it's just the actual planning and the calling... I've called [the co-ordinator] because I thought we were supposed to get one that week, she said that she hadn't ordered it that week, just stuff like that... It's just not knowing... We are supposed to get it every other week... it hasn't happened that way it has been really irregular. [Once] I got it one week after another and then I haven't got it in a long time now (Elise, T, experienced problems with the new co-ordinator).

The Co-op

The co-op was convenient to walk to, with only two of the co-op respondents living outside the local area with less than a twenty-minute walk to the co-op.

It takes me about 15 minutes to walk. Walking back can take longer - it's up that really steep hill... I've usually got loads of vegetables, I hang them on the pram (Hannah, E).

While the co-op was conveniently located near to the respondents, it was not open for more than two hours a week. The co-op's limited opening hours was problematic for the respondents and restricted any choice about when to use it. The opening hours were often the reason why some respondents stopped using the co-op regularly or at all. The time people had available to access the co-op changed over the period as different demands on their time arose and therefore affected their ability to use and benefit from it. It only took one activity to conflict with the co-ops opening hours, which would prevent them from doing one of the activities.

I mean unfortunately like those couple of weeks where something happened, that was it ...I couldn't have made it, it's sometimes a wee bit frustrating, but that is part and parcel of the co-op I think (Penny, E).

The co-op respondents would have preferred the co-op to have longer opening hours and to open at least twice a week, as it was difficult to fit attending the co-op in with daily responsibilities. If the co-op opened twice a week, they would have had more opportunity and choice regarding when to use it.

It would be quite nice if you had it starting earlier... She's got playgroup and that's a commitment, it sounds pathetic but she doesn't go on a Thursday 'cause it's 10-12 so it cuts in between [the co-op hours 10.30 to 12.30]... Now that we have decided not to try and fit in her playgroup with it, it's easier to go, in fact that's what we're doing tomorrow so she can come with me... You just can't do anything beforehand... if you could just go to the food co-op and get it over and done [and then] go out... (Jo, E).

The time within which the respondents could use the co-op were further restricted by the need to be there as soon as it opened. As the co-op became more popular, the selection of produce available was reduced as items quickly sold out, therefore the opportunity for the respondents to benefit from it was reduced. This resulted in some respondents not attending the co-op if they were going to arrive after it had been open for an hour, as the selection of produce available would be sparse.

I thought the availability was fine, you had to be there pretty early, it has to be said. I remember turning up once really late and there really wasn't much left at all... I did actually try and get over there fairly early...there was a bit more choice basically (Sian, E).

Both Projects

Both projects were convenient for the respondents to use, as the pick-up point for the produce was located locally. Despite the co-op respondents' problems in attending it most of them did try to change their plans to continue to use them. Collecting the GFB could be fitted around work hours and other commitments.

In order to use the projects some respondents adapted their shopping patterns. A few respondents, who followed shopping pattern II (used facilities close by and affordable) and pattern I.ii (travelled far to use one affordable supermarket) began to use their project in addition to their shopping pattern, in a similar way that using health food shops was incorporated into regular shopping patterns by some of the GFB respondents. The co-op respondents who followed shopping pattern I.i (used many local facilities) were familiar with shopping at different shops and buying their produce from a different shop to their other groceries. Using the co-op was similar to incorporating another shop into their routine. For the student GFB respondents who followed pattern III (convenience as a priority) incorporating the GFB into their routine was not difficult as the box was delivered to the building they lived in, thereby not requiring a lot of their time. However, the routine of ordering the box for these three respondents proved difficult through problems with their co-ordinator and receiving the vouchers.

6.4.2 Choices Within the Projects Compared to Other Shops

Selection and Control

The produce was more affordable at the projects than purchasing produce from elsewhere. Only Helen could purchase the GFB produce at the same price from her local Price Chopper supermarket. Some respondents had locally priced up the items in the GFB and organic box and found them to be cheaper rather than purchasing them from their other regular outlets.

...When I work out the cost of it [the box], here we have relatively inexpensive fruits and vegetables but you don't get the variety for the price. You have to think of your budget... needs and when I just look at the price and the amount of food that you get it's far more worth it than buying individual fruits and stuff (Cath, T, the variety for the cost makes the box value for money).

This affordability allowed the respondents the opportunity to buy more produce than previously or to save money if they purchased the same amount as they usually did.

However, the methods of payment and the amount of money required in each project were considerably different.

The Co-op

The co-op respondents could spend as much or little money as they wanted on the day that the co-op was open. Although the co-op offered a smaller selection of produce than the supermarkets, its low prices and limited packaging meant respondents could purchase produce in quantities that suited their needs. This offered the co-op respondents more choice over the produce they could purchase and gave them a wider selection of affordable produce, including unfamiliar items of produce.

...Yeah I tried the sweet potatoes...I don't know what I had expected, before I would just not have had it, yeah they are expensive and I would have just have walked right past them [in the supermarket]... Using the co-op has made a big difference because it means I can afford to buy things that I consider to be for a healthy diet without paying the likes of the supermarket [prices], so that has helped (Penny, E).

When using the co-op, the respondents usually spent the same amount of money as they did at other shopping outlets. However, they received a larger quantity of produce from the co-op.

We just don't eat as much fruit if I can't get to the co-op because of the prices, especially the smaller shops - the prices are a lot really, so I just don't buy as much. Tesco is more reasonable but I mean compared to the co-op you know, the co-op spoils you as well, things that you might have thought as a bargain are no longer (at Tesco's). You think what a blinking cheek, what's your mark up on those? So yeah, we have been forced to buy from the supermarket. I am not happy with the prices there although the quality is all right (Hannah, E).

For some respondents, the co-op's low prices made it less stressful to shop there than using other facilities. Respondents were less likely to add up the cost of the food when at the co-op than when using other shops, as they knew the prices were affordable. This was even though items were bought loose and respondents were not aware of the price

until they reached the checkout, whereas at the supermarket most items were pre-priced or scales were available for customers to use.

[At the co-op] if I see something I fancy I know I can just put it in my basket without having to stand and add up how much I have in the basket... You always know if you take a tenner with you, you are always going to get change... So you're not going out and shopping on what you can afford, you're like "oh well I can afford this 'cause it's cheap enough," so you're just buying extra sort of thing... I mean for other shops I'm stopping every two minutes counting how much I've got in the trolley. Up there (at the co-op) I'll go – "oh just shove another one in", I can afford it, it's totally different, it is less stressful ...(Jane, E).

The exceptions were Jenni and Sheena who were still conscious and controlled how much money they spent at the co-op. As Sheena put it, "I am always roughly a fiver because I know that's my limit".

The co-op environment, which included the layout of the premises and vibrant atmosphere, also influenced the respondents in selecting and purchasing more produce. This was due to the friendliness of the volunteers and other users, the size of the venue and the layout of the produce. The produce was the main reason for their being at the co-op, therefore the respondents found they paid more attention to purchasing it than they would at supermarkets. This was due to the layout of fresh produce (being piled high in the middle of the room or around the walls) usually in large quantities, without many other groceries being sold. One respondent joked that there was 'something in the air', which made everyone purchase more produce than they would normally have done. Some respondents found that the food conversations across the small room or the sight of someone picking up an appealing item of produce, meant they too would consider buying it.

...Having a range of good quality vegetables and fruit there would encourage you to buy it...and the prices... Certainly I've found myself go back and buy bananas because the person in front has a huge bunch and you sort of think mmm (Jo, E).

The GFB

Buying the GFB involved a financial obligation that was not present at the co-op; the GFB required a set amount of money to be paid in advance of its arrival. This was generally unproblematic as most respondents received a subsidy towards the cost of the box or had co-ordinators who were flexible about when the payment was made. However, Rosie found this obligation restrictive. She did not always have the money available and found her co-ordinator was unwilling to adapt to her situation and was being persistent in contacting her for payments. Half the respondents received a subsidy towards the cost of the box, which allowed them regularly to receive produce that was normally expensive or unavailable in their local area.

Oh definitely, I feel that I save money [by receiving the GFB]. If I didn't have the box I would be buying... onions and potatoes for sure because I eat them a lot, but probably not in the quantities that I have been getting them, but I mean I'm not spending the money on buying those (Rachel, T).

6.4.3 Quantity and Variety

While both projects resulted in the respondents having a larger quantity and variety of produce in their homes, again this was done in different ways.

The Co-op

The co-op respondents had the choice of what quantity and variety of produce they wanted to purchase. For example, respondents could buy onions at the same price per pound regardless of how many they bought from the co-op, whereas to benefit from the supermarkets' offers they usually had to buy a large bag of onions or pay a higher price to buy loose onions. Penny's fruit bowl previously lacked variety as she bought whatever fruit the supermarket had on special offer that week. This entailed buying large pre-bagged items, which her household would get bored of, such as only having lots of oranges. Going to the co-op allowed her more variety for less money. Respondents also

liked the variety of the same items of produce, such as the option of purchasing three different types of apples or potatoes.

...I never used to buy as much fruit out of Tesco's but the fruit sort of side of it has changed. I never used to buy apples and stuff like that... now I do. Now I have a big dish full of apples and mandarins and stuff and that's changed... I like buying different things now - sometimes I buy mangoes. ...I like buying fresh herbs instead of dried... (Becky, E).

Most co-op respondents relied solely on the co-op for their produce needs. The co-op respondents needed to be flexible about what produce they could buy, as availability was sometimes limited. This led to some respondents using other shops to top-up on produce.

... I would say it's quite good [the availability], quite seasonal, that I like. But you know you certainly couldn't guarantee to get, may be if you wanted courgettes for example they might not have them or something like that. Whereas at the supermarket you would always have them, but I don't mind that I think as long as they have got five things that I can cook around, but in general it's been good (Jo, E).

The GFB

The GFB respondents had a choice of which box to order but not its exact contents. The lack of choice of the produce received in the boxes was generally not a negative issue or seen as a lack of control; it was accepted as part of the project. Most respondents liked the change of not choosing what to purchase and looked forward to the surprise element. Other respondents would have preferred to choose themselves, to avoid the produce they disliked.

Sometimes [not being able to choose] is a problem because I would like to see lots of carrots because I know my daughter would eat them, but on the other hand I believe in the good of the whole programme. And if I do run out of something like that I can go to the grocery store, I don't believe it inconveniences me that much (Pam, T).

The way the variety of produce changed over the period and the balance of fruit and vegetables in the box was usually unproblematic to most even though it was slightly

different to what the GFB respondents bought themselves. Some respondents would have preferred a wider variety of and more fruit than vegetables, reflecting their children's preference for fruit rather than vegetables.

...I mean maybe it's hard to include... banana would be nice. They give me a lot more vegetables than fruit. I'm a fruit person, I wouldn't mind seeing more pineapple, I'm being a little bit picky too... (Rosie, T).

Except for Rosie and Viv, most respondents liked the GFB's mix of basic and unusual items of produce. They had both ordered the box for the shortest period and had eventually stopped ordering any boxes partly due to disliking the variety in them. Viv found the box did not contain the variety that she needed to suit her children's tastes. Despite Viv and Rosie's complaints they had both started trying unfamiliar produce. It is unclear whether other respondents felt like this to begin with and then became accustomed to the variety in the box over time.

...But there are some other vegetables that you don't use so much and even not familiar with and there is a certain type of zucchini which looked like actually a mini pumpkin, the yellow one. They were actually absolutely delicious, I just never buy them or I haven't seen them in the grocery store that much so, but I enjoyed that (Despite the enjoyment of trying new items, Viv, T, was still not happy with the box's variety).

The appropriateness of the quantity and variety of items in the GFB depended on respondents' familiarity with produce and their households' size. Most respondents relied solely on the box's contents or bought and chose their own produce on the week that they did not receive the box. This allowed them some choice while also having the surprise of the box. Respondents who did not eat a lot of produce or had smaller households, topped up on produce on an irregular basis. Sometimes it was difficult for them to use up all of the items in the box before the next one arrived. As Pam ordered her box weekly, she rotated which boxes she bought to avoid having too much produce.

... I vary it, small organic, the fruit box, the small GFB depending on what our needs are. Like if I have too many vegetables this week then next week when I order I will get just the fruit box because we probably eat more of the fruit than the vegetables... I try to figure out what fits between my budget, and how long it will last and what kind of meals I prepare (Pam, T).

A few other respondents tried a variety of boxes to see which one best met their needs. John preferred the GFB as “clearly that is their mainstay because they have got that product down to a pat, it’s really substantial”.

Sometimes produce was swapped, given away or thrown out because respondents had not been able to use up all the items. Most respondents at some point had given away extra produce. Beneficial spin-offs were created from this, such as respondents developing a sense of worth, as they were normally not in the position to do this. It also resulted in ‘benefits in kind’ as friends and neighbours returned the favour of receiving the produce.

I give some away, yeah I give a lot away. I got corn that wasn't too bad, but em sometimes I get stuff that I can try, then you get used to something and they change it that kind of bothers me... I would normally buy some of the stuff they give you, most of the stuff that they give you, like 60 per cent of the stuff they do give me I wouldn't normally buy (Rosie, T).

6.4.4 New and Unfamiliar Items

All the respondents received or bought produce that was unfamiliar to them or they irregularly purchased, mainly due to cost reasons. The GFB respondents received and tried produce that some household members disliked and were therefore never bought. The co-op respondents bought unusual items such as mangoes, paw paw and pineapples. Items such as grapes were purchased more regularly because of their frequently low cost at the co-op. The GFB respondents found it was beneficial to order the box as they increased the variety of produce they consumed.

... For the first time I tried asparagus two months ago, it was so interesting, yeah now I go and buy it. It's expensive asparagus. It is very expensive that's why getting the box is a real treat for me, it is (Cath, T).

... With foods that we don't eat obviously because we don't like them we don't buy them, never even thinking that our daughter might, so again having something like cantaloupe come into the house... cantaloupe is something I never eat... I tried it out on her, she liked it, but then I was trying to force it on her everyday trying to finish the cantaloupe because of course a whole cantaloupe and there is only one small child eating it. So I think she got pretty ticked-off with me about that one (Laura, T).

6.4.5 Reliability

The respondents knew what to expect whether it was the affordable wide selection of produce at the co-op or the cost of the boxes. Respondents could budget for using the projects and knew that they had a reliable source of produce entering the home when money was tight and their intake of fresh items was normally reduced. The respondents also knew how often the projects operated and that they would be open or deliver on a regular basis. Amanda found the arrival of the GFB regular and reliable at a time when she normally had no produce in the home. Amanda paid for her box when her money arrived at the start of the month, then her organic box arrived at the end of the month when she was short of money and unable to afford any produce, let alone organic. Using the projects allowed the respondents to have produce in their home more regularly.

...And it's there every week, I know it's going to be there, ken it's no like it's going to be there one week and away the next, it's going to be on every week, so you know that it's always going to be there for you (Becky, E).

Using the projects helped respondents to gain control over a wider selection of food choices regarding purchasing produce. They were able to rely on regularly purchasing fresh produce, which was in line with their food preferences and budget. Respondents had a greater variety and quantity of produce. The co-op respondents had the ability to choose which produce they bought, whereas the GFB respondents did not. The GFB respondents' lack of choice over what produce they received was taken to be either

beneficial or inconvenient depending on the respondents' outlooks and needs. The majority of all the respondents liked receiving and buying a mixture of staple items and the unusual items, even if they were not personally choosing the items themselves.

6.4.5 Changes in Shopping Habits as a Result of Using the Projects

During the research, half of the GFB respondents', and some co-op respondents' shopping patterns changed. As outlined above, Rosie and Trish had less time available so they started to use convenience shops more frequently, which meant their shopping became more expensive than previously, as they began to shop like other respondents in pattern III. Sian started to shop for reduced-cost food items in the evening at one supermarket as a way of saving time and keeping her costs low. These adjustments reflected a change in the time the respondents had available to spend shopping.

Other respondents also experienced changes in their shopping patterns, either out of personal choice, or it just occurred over time. Some of these changes evolved through respondents using their local food project. Regularly receiving produce from the projects resulted in most respondents not buying any other produce that week from their regular shops, unless there were specific items that they wanted because they had sold out at the co-op or were not available in the box.

Respondents who shopped around for the best deals no longer needed to use a shop to purchase produce, which suited the co-op respondents that followed shopping pattern I.i; they were not always satisfied with the other facilities on offer to them. Cath, a GFB respondent, had shopped on a daily basis and used lots of local shops, which had become time consuming and expensive, as she often impulse shopped. Receiving the GFB coincided with Cath choosing to change her shopping pattern (from I.i to I.ii) to save her time and money. As a result of receiving her produce from the box she decided to try to do only one large shop a fortnight for the rest of her food. This conscious effort enabled Cath to take more control over her shopping budget. She set an amount to spend at the supermarket and knew how much the box would cost; she then tried to stick to her

budget. Kate was also consciously trying to stop shopping as frequently as she did. When Kate could not use her local co-op it meant she had to go to the shops for produce, which always involved her buying more food than she intended.

... I'm bad as well because if I go into the supermarket I won't just go for fruit and vegetables... I will go around [the rest of the shop]. I can't go into a supermarket without spending ten pounds. I find it really, really difficult to just go in and get a couple of things... (Kate, E, using the co-op enabled her to shop less frequently and therefore avoid the temptation of impulse shopping).

Some of the respondents who relied on their local convenience shops (pattern III) also found that receiving the GFB meant they made less use of the convenience shop. They would use the convenience shops to buy food to go with the produce they already had in their home, which saved them time and money.

The respondents who mainly used one supermarket found that they could quickly skim past the produce aisle, which saved them time and meant they had fewer fresh items of food to buy and to carry home. In contrast to the above, some GFB respondents who regularly shopped at one large supermarket began to shop more frequently but for fewer items from their local shops, as they just required groceries to go with the produce from the project.

...I haven't been doing large grocery shopping... the past couple of months at all because I have been so busy, so it has been nice to have the box here... I think of what I do have at home and if I have the box and I have the vegetables I'll buy something that will go along with what I do have... (Elise, T, describing how the box helped reduce her time spent shopping).

Tania and John found that, as they became used to receiving the GFB they started to shop fewer times at a large supermarket. By the second interview they relied on receiving the GFB, then bought any other fresh items of food from a small local supermarket and occasionally went to the distant larger supermarket to stock up on dry foods. This change from a large to a small supermarket happened as a result of

incorporating the GFB into their shopping patterns and a desire to spend less time shopping, as John explains:

...I seem to think that we used to go to No Frills more often than we do now. Maybe our patterns have changed so that we don't fill up the fridge so much, as we have the GFB. We have rice and pasta and all that stuff and then we just have to go out [locally] and get fresh what we need and that's it. So I think maybe our patterns have changed from a time when we used to go and get all the meat, all the vegetables, all the breads and milk and all the household cleaners and fill up the car every couple of weeks. But now we're not doing that and it's for the best... We are finding that we are pretty busy and we don't need to be doing that (John, T).

Using the projects allowed a few respondents to use fewer shops and therefore save time and reduce the risk of impulse shopping. Other respondents used the opportunity of using the projects to do a large shop less often, while using local shops more frequently to top up on basic fresh foods. Either way the respondents felt the changes allowed them to shop more in line with their wishes, whether to save time, money or to be more convenient. There was no typical way of shopping which using the projects led to. What these examples demonstrated was that using the project was incorporated into the respondents shopping habits and on occasion brought about incremental changes, which the respondents appeared at that time to prefer from their previous shopping pattern.

6.5 Discussion

The different shopping patterns demonstrated respondents' use of strategies to maximise the food that could be bought subject to the factors of time, convenience and distance. The shopping patterns, apart from pattern II, were not the ideal of locally available affordable foods that offered a selection of food suitable for the respondents' health, time and cost considerations. This meant that a balance was struck depending on the respondents' time, mode of transport and money available.

The shopping patterns that the respondents used reflected the 'opportunity shopper' and the 'necessity shopper'. Opportunity shoppers were able and willing to spend time to

obtain the best available deals. They would travel and stock up on items when they were on special deals and low prices. Necessity shoppers bought their food more on a daily basis in line with their current needs and convenience, which meant they were less likely to benefit from good deals and less likely to stock up on certain items of food.

For most respondents, prior to using the projects there was limited access to items of produce, and groceries in general, from local affordable facilities. Without leaving the local area or taking the time to shop at a number of places the availability of produce was limited and often expensive, if it was available.

Different strategies were employed by the respondents to make their money go further. Sometimes these strategies were employed to maximise health preferences (buying affordable frozen produce despite the household not enjoying the taste), for convenience (purchasing long shelf life canned foods) and to keep costs to a minimum (buying food on special offer, in bulk or reduced near their sell-by date). These strategies sometimes restricted respondents' control over purchasing food in line with their taste and health preferences. These strategies (usually for cost minimisation) were generally conscious activities, similar to those outlined by Hirshman et al (2003). Hirshman et al (2003) found that the respondents consciously shopped in order to stay within their budget, while accounting for household tastes and practical factors of time and transport. In this study, the respondents were conscious of ways to obtain the best deals, such as Viv and Helen choosing the more affordable supermarkets with less choice in order to restrict the temptation to buy more expensive foods, as well as keeping food costs low. Sheena, while using many shops to obtain the best bargains, was also always aware of how much to spend on different items of food, so that no more than five pounds was ever spent on produce at the co-op.

Through using the projects, some respondents' shopping patterns slowly changed to patterns that the respondents considered more in line with their current health, time and cost motivations. The projects led to an increased variety of produce coming into

people's homes and fresh high quality produce being bought more frequently. Some respondents began to include using their local project as part of their shopping routine, as the project had a level of reliability about what it could offer and the cost involved. The main difference was that the co-op respondents had an element of choice when using their project, in regard to how much to spend and on what items of produce (providing the item was on sale), whereas the GFB respondents could select the box but not its exact contents. Allowing the respondents to have more produce coming into their home gave more control over purchasing food in line with their budget, taste and health preferences. An element of stress around shopping for produce was reduced due to reliability, low costs and availability.

Chapter 7 Food Preparation, Cooking and Consumption

7.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at food activities within the home, in particular how the produce and foods purchased, as outlined in the last chapter, were prepared, cooked and consumed. It considers what food choices the respondents faced and how use of the projects affected these. Any changes in their food activities reflected the respondents' interest in and control of their food circumstances. The findings that emerge help to understand the different ways in which the projects achieved their aims of enabling and encouraging the respondents and their households to eat more produce.

The first part of the chapter explores the respondents' skills, confidence, motivation and the priority given to food activities within the home and what this meant in terms of the food choices that were made. The households' food preferences and the respondents' daily activities and time constraints influenced food choices. The second part of the chapter looks at any changes in the daily food choices and food activities that occurred through using the projects. This allows an insight into how the respondents' control over their food choices within the home changed when using the projects in the context of their household and daily routine.

7.2 Approaches to Food Activities within the Home

7.2.1 The Approaches to Food Activities

From the respondents' self-description and the picture that emerged about how food activities fitted into their daily circumstances, three different approaches within the home were apparent. 'Unconfident' were those respondents who lacked the confidence, skills and knowledge to prepare many foods, especially regarding items of produce. The other respondents were all confident and skilled at cooking produce and preparing a variety of meals. This group of confident respondents could be divided into two sub-groups. First, there were the 'proactive' respondents who gave food a high priority in

their lives and were motivated to make a selection of home-made meals and regularly consumed items of produce. The other sub-group of confident respondents is termed 'reactive': food activities were not always a high priority and were fitted around their daily activities when the respondents had some time available.

The respondents' approaches towards food activities were changeable over time, with some respondents in the past placing a different priority on food activities. For instance, Sian was previously proactive in her cooking approach with the preparation of healthy home-made food being a high priority for her. As her children grew older she wanted to concentrate on her career and placed a lower priority on food preparation and cooking, leading to a reactive approach to food activities. The respondents' main reasons for altering their approaches related to changes in employment work patterns. The distinctions of the approaches to food activities are further explored below and outlined in Table 7.1. The approaches highlight the respondents' ability and willingness to incorporate a variety of produce into their diets and to try new and different ways of preparing produce. The aim was not to judge which respondents' approach was best but to consider how the projects had and could help to encourage and enable the consumption of produce in the context of people's daily activities and to influence motivations towards food activities.

Table 7.1 An outline of the respondents’ approaches to food activities

Type of food activities	Approaches		
	Proactive	Reactive	Unconfident
Skill, knowledge and confidence	Abundant	Abundant	Lacking
Priority given to food preparation	High	Medium: food activities to be fitted around other activities	Low
Food Motivations	Cooking, health and nutrition important	Type of cooking and food consumed changed to reflect other priorities	Disliked cooking but wanted satisfaction of being able to cook
Consumption of produce	Ate produce (restricted by availability and cost)	Ate produce (restricted by cost, time, mood, availability)	Fruit and salad consumed, not many vegetables consumed
Type of cooking	Liked to cook from fresh ingredients and experimented regularly	Cooked with a mix of fresh ingredients and convenience / ready- made foods	Restricted in food able to prepare, preferred ready-made or simple ‘snack’ meals
Meals prepared and consumed	Tried to have variety.	Variety depended on many factors	Not much variety
Cooking experience and expectations	Tailored cooking in line with enjoyment of cooking and health interests	Enjoyment varied with circumstances and time available	Low expectations of any attempts to cook, cooking was a chore

The Proactive Respondents

The group of proactive respondents included three from each project in Toronto and Edinburgh. They were all confident cooks and competent in making a variety of meals, including healthy meals. They were different from the other confident respondents because of their high levels of motivation to making food activities a priority in their lives. Prior to using the projects the respondents included produce in their food choices,

but the high costs and limited availability restricted the quantity and variety that was consumed. Their motivations for consuming produce were related to health, nutrition and enjoyment of cooking. Most of the proactive respondents wanted to continue with pursuing a healthier lifestyle. For instance, Tania made time available to experiment and create meals that included less meat and more produce than previously, as part of both her and her husband's efforts to change to healthier diets. Penny was also motivated to try to adopt a healthier diet.

...My dad had a heart attack a good few years ago. So, I know all about [healthy eating].... I know all the right ways of going about it in accordance with current information. [My cooking] hasn't changed all that much [since using the co-op] it's just simply the fact that I can afford to have more fruit and veg (Penny, E).

Generally, the respondents' main meals would be made from home-made food rather than ready-made convenience foods. The respondents were active in trying new foods and meals and cooked more frequently than other respondents. They were confident and able to adapt recipes and meals to suit their needs, as Cath explained:

...You have to know which flavour goes with which flavour, that is something I learned in nutrition school, how to mix flavours and make something palatable. I like to do free style creative cooking...you become creative once you are familiar with the kitchen and enjoy it, the textures and the colours. The more colours that you have on your plate the more balanced diet you have... that is the key to nutritional values (Cath, T).

Cath and Sheena had received training in the kitchen, the other proactive respondents had not. Nevertheless, they were just as confident and motivated and enjoyed trying a variety of produce and cooking it in different ways. These respondents liked to have control over the foods that they ate to ensure the food consumed was in line with their cooking and healthy eating interests.

The Reactive Respondents

The reactive group consisted of four GFB and five co-op respondents. They were able to cook a variety of meals and foods when they wanted to or had the time available. They were the most diverse group of respondents in relation to their range of knowledge, skills, motivations and enjoyment around food activities. The term 'reactive' is used as the respondents all tended to incorporate food preparation and consumption around their lives, as and when it was needed rather than being active in making food preparation a priority. If the respondents were busy, or tired, or not in the mood to cook, or the children were hungry or being demanding then they would choose ready-made foods rather than home-made meals or eating food in line with their health preferences. Some respondents were content with food activities not being a priority in their lives, while others, like Viv, wanted to make food activities a priority and found it difficult to arrange time to cook more home-made foods.

...Sometimes I feel I just want to spend all my time cooking... I actually feel that I want more home-made cooking because in the past, especially the last two weeks, we have been eating out. I have been buying some courses prepared, like let's say lasagne packed up and you just bung it in the oven. But after a while I get tired of it... somehow I want something creative, food that I have made... We have two/three evenings where we have to go places... there is a lot of running around so I find I'm squeezing the time that I prepare food... it is coming home and having something quick, you're hungry. This is not the right way but this is how it is right now (Viv, T).

The respondents made meals that were a mix of home-made cooking and ready-made bought foods and sauces to fit in with their daily activities and household preferences. While most of the respondents had a positive attitude towards healthy eating it was not necessarily reflected in the meals that they prepared. Meals often lacked variety and reflected the children's food preferences over their own, although they did try to include produce on a daily basis. Amanda's household was the exception in this group, as her household did not like ready-made foods. They always ate home-made vegetarian foods. However, Amanda was reactive rather than proactive towards food activities, as she was not motivated to try new recipes regularly and food activities were not always a priority

for her. The reactive respondents' enjoyment of, and motivation for, cooking varied with their current circumstances.

The Unconfident Respondents

The final group of respondents, three from each project, lacked confidence and skills in the preparation and cooking of food, especially fresh vegetables and unfamiliar meals. Their lack of confidence in cooking was not reflected in other areas of their lives, as demonstrated through their self-opinions and backed up by achievements in their employment or personal lives that they referred to. Except for Pam's increased levels of motivation, the other respondents did not consider cooking a priority. Jane was advised by her doctor to make more meals from fresh ingredients to improve her children's diet but this was considered a chore rather than a motivator to change. It led to Jane preparing more home-made meals, but they did not include many fresh vegetables, as some household members disliked them.

...I'm using more fresh food than what I was before, before it was like microwave meals in five minutes and there's your tea, but not now. I've got to make a lot more casseroles and chicken and roast dinner... I would only have that at a special occasion before but now because our eating habits have changed I've got to do it once a fortnight or something... (Jane, E).

The unconfident respondents had conflicting thoughts on cooking: they wanted to have a sense of achievement in being able to improve their cooking skills, while also having a dislike for it and expecting any attempts at cooking to go wrong.

...I think I would enjoy cooking if I had the knowledge to cook, and have it taste edible... I would love to be able to get the satisfaction of cooking a meal that was edible (Trish, E).

Pam was typical of the unconfident cooks when she said, "If I do follow instructions I have to read them five times over to make sure I'm doing it right because I know I am going to leave out something vital". Pam, like the other unconfident respondents, often

made quick ‘snack’ foods as the main meal in order to avoid cooking a meal that would be a ‘disaster’.

The meals cooked were often simple, repetitive and sometimes lacking in produce, with most main meals involving processed foods or ingredients that did not require much preparation. The unconfident co-op respondents did not have any initial motivation to eat more produce. The unconfident Toronto respondents did initially want to increase their consumption of produce and to improve their cooking skills, although they were not sure how to do this.

...I would like to become maybe a partial vegetarian but I...don’t know how to cook a lot of vegetables, actually I don’t know how to cook a lot of stuff period (Rachel, T).

For most unconfident respondents cooking demanded too much time and effort to produce a meal that nobody would like. The co-op and GFB unconfident respondents were more likely to consume fruit and salad that was easy to prepare rather than vegetables that required preparation and cooking.

7.2.2 Time Issues and Food as a Priority

The respondents experienced different time constraints. The GFB respondents were more likely to have work or study commitments while most of the co-op respondents had more time available and stayed at home. However, in terms of how the respondents dealt with their daily demands, their approach to food activities appeared to be more influential than the actual time they had available. Table 7.2 outlines how respondents were influenced by, and worked around, the time available for food activities, resulting in different levels of control over the foods they prepared.

Table 7.2: The influence of the time available

Influence of Time	Approaches		
	Proactive	Reactive	Unconfident
Planning	Advance preparation of meals	Sometimes preparation and planning, sometimes other commitments dominated	Sometimes planning, sometimes not
Time as a Barrier	Despite time constraints meals usually prepared within cooking and health aims	When time restricted - repetition of foods and less produce consumed	Convenience foods and snacks were consumed regardless of time available
Changes to Time Available	Adapt to time constraints with ease – able to prepare meals quickly that included produce	Adapt to time constraints by changing food priority from home-made to convenience foods or mixture of both	Convenience foods or repetition of meals saved time, cooking from basic ingredients required lot of time due to lack of skills
Food as a Priority Over Time	Food a priority so tried to make sure time available at some point of the day	More likely to make food preparation a priority when time or special reason, such as friends coming for dinner	Usually food preparation not a priority.

The Proactive Respondents

The proactive respondents adapted and planned their meals in advance to fit in with any time constraints arising from family activities or work commitments, thereby keeping food activities at the fore and within their interests and control.

How far in advance do you think about what you're going to eat?

It's never any more than a couple of days, like I made spaghetti bolognese the night before the other night. So if I ken I've got dentist, doctors, physio...I make it the night before or I'll have a baked tattie... and cottage cheese, something like that something that I ken is going to be quick (Sheena, E).

The proactive respondents' skills and knowledge allowed them to follow through their motivations to keep food activities important. Despite any time constraints, meals were usually prepared in accordance with their cooking and health interests. They were flexible about meals being prepared around their daily activities, although they did make sure time was available at some point of the day. Cath in Toronto, in common with some of the other respondents, often made her meals in large quantities to provide sufficient for two days or more. This ensured that the meal was home-made and healthy while fitting into her busy and tiring schedule. The proactive respondents were able to prepare a healthy meal, even when time was short, as Penny points out:

...I don't like making things that take forever in a kitchen, so most of the dishes I cook are fairly quick anyway so they fit around... I just schedule on days when we are short of time; pasta or stir fry because I know it will take next to no time to do... Or if I've got a day where I'm short of time in the afternoon and I've got plenty of time in the morning I'll prepare the meal earlier on and then store it in the fridge until the evening (Penny, E).

More unusual or different meals were tried on days when respondents had some spare time to look through recipes or to ask friends for ideas. The proactive respondents' use of jars of sauces and cans of soup to save time was not as great as that of other respondents. Some respondents in Edinburgh purchased foods in jars and cans because they were more affordable than preparing the foods themselves rather than for convenience. The respondents were likely to make sure that they had some control over food activities so that they ate foods that were home-made or healthy, despite any time constraints.

The Reactive Respondents

The priority given to food preparation by the reactive respondents changed frequently in relation to the household's demands on their time. Sometimes the respondents prepared and planned meals ahead of time and had a sense of control and choice about the foods that were prepared, like the proactive respondents. Mostly, however, they reacted to

their current situation so that if they became short of time meal preparation became less important and the routine of preparing quick familiar meals dominated.

It entirely depends on what is happening - if we're doing something else and we come in late it is all just a big rush [preparing foods], if we're not doing anything else then it is quite a nice time. My daughter will sit and do her homework and I'll cook and they will help. They'll put carrots and things into the pan; that's quite nice (Kate, E).

Time constraints in relation to the respondents' household activities and work commitments were influential in determining what food was prepared and consumed. Over the research period, the Toronto reactive respondents had less time available to cook, which led to their spending less time on preparing foods. The fluctuating motivation and household tastes of some respondents meant that they preferred to have quick fast, ready-made food for convenience. For others, such as Viv and Laura in Toronto, they wanted to make more of an effort to cook more home-made meals than they currently prepared. Respondents were more likely to be motivated to make different and more adventurous meals when they had a change from their daily routine, such as having friends over for dinner or all of the household present at dinnertime.

How do your family's activities and demands influence the foods that you prepare?

It's pretty central really...it does influence it an awful lot because people are in and out at different times... If there are four or five people here then it's a lot cheaper to do one thing for everyone rather than everyone having separate things... It does influence whether you rush out and buy a bag of chips or whether you sit down and do the whole [family meal] thing (Sian, E).

Meals made from fresh ingredients and/or new unfamiliar ones being tried for the first time were usually prepared in advance in the morning or weekend when there was free time available. This was not done to the same extent as was the case for the proactive respondents. Having free time available made the task of cooking more enjoyable and relaxing. The respondents often did not feel that they had time to learn or try new

recipes. Like some of the proactive cooks, some respondents prepared large quantities of food or soups to last a couple of days in order to save time cooking. Making soup was a quick way to use up any produce that was left over.

Well I know I have to cook right... The time just depends on what I have to prepare for that day, like sometimes I have stew that lasts for two days... (Amanda, T).

Time was an important factor in determining the priority given to and control over food prepared on any particular day. Respondents' motivation and mood to cook were also important in determining whether or not certain items of produce would be tried and prepared in a meal. The time available to cook frequently changed on a weekly or even daily basis.

The Unconfident Cooks

The time that the unconfident respondents had available for food activities was changeable. Often the unconfident respondents were tired or unmotivated to prepare and cook meals. As food activities were not a high priority in their daily lives there was not much meal preparation planning, with convenience foods often being consumed, regardless of the time available. It was quick to use ready-made meals, as their lack of cooking skills and low confidence meant it could take them longer than it could take the other respondents to prepare items of produce to make a meal. Trish tried to plan her meals in the morning but when she started working full-time she found it difficult to find any spare time to do this.

I'm not cooking as much in the house, cooking for one [as the children are fed at school] it's like I can't be bothered. I just have a snack... (Trish, E, after starting work).

As Pam points out, prioritising and decision-making about what to cook and whether it was to be home-made resulted from a combination of many factors for the unconfident respondents. In addition to time constraints, other factors such as mood, cost,

convenience, how easy the food was to prepare and how long it would take to make were important.

How do you decide what you are going to cook?

It depends on the schedule, how I feel, like I had high hopes last week of cooking [but didn't feel like it]... So it's mood, how much time I have to put into it, just a lot of variables... It depends on guilt, have I been cooking enough proper meals? ... Some of it is time dependent (Pam, T).

7.2.3 The Influence of Household Members

All the respondents were influenced by who was present at a meal and the type of meal (lunch, dinner, special event), as this would determine food preferences and the importance of the meal. Children's and partner's tastes were an issue that all respondents had to deal with. Strategies were employed by all parents to encourage their children to eat more food, especially produce. The majority of respondents tried to include vegetables in the household's main meal on a daily basis. The respondents dealt with the preferences of the household members in ways that reflected their approach to food activities. Table 7.3 outlines the differences that will be discussed below in relation to the respondents and decision-making, risk taking, choice of foods prepared and household influences.

Table 7.3 The influence of household members

Influence of Household Members	Approaches		
	Proactive	Reactive	Unconfident
Decision Making	Usually respondent's choice	Some meals reflected children's choice rather than respondents.	Ate different foods to suit different tastes
Risk Taking	Experimenting normal, not seen as large risk	Demotivated trying foods if children picky and too much effort required if for only themselves	High risk in trying new foods and meals
Household Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meals not planned around fussy household tastes• Actively encouraged others to try foods.• Had partners to cook for or were trained cooks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sometimes easier to cater for children's preferences than priority of healthy food• Different meals made or meals based around children's tastes• Mainly single parents, often demotivated to cook, due to children's preferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meal restricted due to household members' fussy tastes
Expectations of Households Reactions	Expected most household members to try new foods	Mix of high and low expectations depending on who cooking for	Low expectations – expect cooking to be a 'disaster'
Control / Choice in Meals Made and Consumed	Able to introduce new meals/foods	Preparing meals to suit others' tastes, especially if only adult at that meal time	Felt limited in what could prepare for others

Proactive Respondents

The proactive respondents generally decided on the main meal to be prepared, thereby following their health and cooking interests with consideration given to the household member's preferences.

How do you decide what you are going to prepare?

I do, I am the boss of the kitchen [laughing]... I check what I have in the fridge and just decide... (Tania, T).

When the children were included in meal choices this was within limits set by the respondents, such as giving them a selection of meals to choose from. Some of the proactive respondents liked to involve their children in the preparation of meals and all of them encouraged household members to try a variety of meals and foods. The proactive respondents seemed to be undeterred by household members' disliking some of the foods prepared and persevered with children's fussy food tastes. Usually the same meal or meal variations were made for everyone in the household. Helen frequently tried new recipes and vegetables despite the fact that she did not expect her children to like them. If they did (which was actually often) it was 'a bonus'. The married proactive respondents were encouraged to try different meals even if their children were fussy with respect to their eating habits, as their partners would try it. This was despite the fact that their husbands were not always home at meal times. The single parent proactive respondents, Cath in Toronto and Sheena in Edinburgh, were both trained cooks and happily made a diverse range of meals. As the respondents normally experimented and tried different meals it was not considered a large risk to experiment with the unfamiliar items of produce.

Reactive Respondents

The majority of reactive cooks were single parents or their partners were not present at meal times. Cooking for just one adult de-motivated many of the respondents from regularly making more meals from fresh ingredients or being adventurous with their cooking. Frequently the children would not eat these meals, which meant the respondents would have to make one meal for themselves and then another for the children.

Sometimes I do think because I'm a lone parent I do adapt to them, because they're eating fish fingers or something like that - rather than make something for myself I'll have what they are having... It is entirely pointless me making something just for me that I'm fairly sure the children won't eat. Things that I like to make are curries and quite spicy food...(Kate, E).

Concern about preparing a meal that the household would eat without any turmoil sometimes prevailed over the priority of eating produce and eating healthily. Some respondents devised meal variations as a solution to suit everyone's demands. Where households ate the same main meal it was often in line with the child's rather than respondent's food preferences. This meant that the respondents tended to cater for the more difficult members of the household, therefore to an extent, having limited control over what meals were prepared, despite being responsible for preparing the food. Making meals that the children preferred held the advantage of being quick, easy to prepare and reliable, as the children were likely to eat them. The risk of trying unfamiliar meals with the household could be high depending on different household members' preferences, as well as the respondents' motivation to try something new.

Unconfident Respondents

Where the unconfident respondent's household had more than one child and/or they had two adults present at meal times the members normally ate different foods. Otherwise the children's tastes often dominated what foods were prepared. There was a limited amount of vegetables consumed by household members because of their taste preferences. Often a household member's dislike for vegetables was stated as the reason why respondents did not regularly prepare and cook them.

Do you try to cook different meals?

It tends to be a lot of the same things that I know she's going to eat. I would hate to spend a lot of time cooking something and then she will just turn her nose up at it or something. I don't see the point in that (Jenni, E).

Individual household members' tastes prioritised what meals were prepared. For instance, Jane's picky youngest daughter and husband's tastes dominated what food would be prepared. The oldest daughter liked to eat a variety of vegetables but was only given this opportunity when she was visiting relatives. The respondents often prepared meals that lacked variety due to household members' demands, as well as respondents' own motivation and ability to prepare dishes, as Jane points out,

... I hardly get a choice in what I buy for them. It tends to be the same sort of thing week in, week out and to make a change is totally impossible. I've got to make sandwiches or a toastie or something just to change it, but me I would eat lots of different pastas and stuff, but it's only my eldest daughter that would eat that... She is quite good for her food actually, she eats healthy, she even eats spinach soup. She'll eat that at her gran's, its disgusting (Jane, E).

There was a high risk involved in trying new meals when the respondents were already not confident with their cooking and household members were unlikely to try them.

7.3 The Process of Change

All households experienced an increase in the variety and quantity of produce that they consumed when they used their local CFI. This section explores the changes that occurred. The changes related to the effect of having more produce from the projects in the respondents' homes, as well as wider issues of motivation and barriers.

The presence of the produce in the home made a difference to all of the households' consumption of produce. This difference was on two levels. The first concerned the influence of produce on household members, especially the increased consumption of fruit as a snack. The second level was that the meals prepared by respondents were influenced, by the ingredients available in the home resulting from them thinking more about using produce in their meals than they normally would have. The following part looks at what these changes were and how they occurred in relation to the respondents' approaches to food activities.

7.3.1 The Household and the Presence of Produce

The increased availability and subsequent visibility of produce, especially fruit, in the home had an effect on the household's consumption of produce. In Edinburgh, through using the co-op, respondents frequently had a full fruit bowl with a larger quantity and wider selection of fruit, compared to previously. The fruit bowl was significant in terms of its accessibility and visibility to all household members; it was often placed in a highly visible location, such as an easy-to-see part of the household's living room. Household members were usually, within reason, allowed unrestricted access to the fruit bowl. The respondents found that the whole household ate more fruit when the bowl was full and had plenty of variety "because it was just sitting there".

...They just help themselves to fruit. They know where it's kept and if it's not in the fruit bowl it's in the cupboard and it's quite low down, and I let them take as much of that as they want...The kids get a lot of fruit now. Before [using the co-op] I would get a limited amount...(Trish, E).

...[My partner] he wouldn't have touched a bit of fruit or he certainly won't go and buy like a bag of grapes or something from the shops... But I think because there is always a big bowl of fruit everyone just helps themselves...(Becky, E).

Fruit was used as an alternative to children's uneaten meals or sweets and took some pressure off the respondents to provide other snacks for their children. Some children were actively encouraged to help themselves to fruit rather than eating sweets, with some fruit bowls being placed at the child's eye level. Other respondents were less active in encouraging their children to eat fruit and just noticed that the children were more inclined to eat fruit if the bowl was full.

...If I go up [to the co-op]... if the kids are hassling me and wanting sweets, I can just say take something from the fruit bowl and they [do]. Whereas when I've no got any fruit I'm like leave me alone and they're just at me the whole time. But if there is fruit there they'll eat it, they'll no moan about it, they enjoy fruit (Jane, E, who prior to using the co-op rarely bought fruit).

When the fruit bowl was empty, sweets or biscuits were the easiest alternative, despite

not always being the respondents' preferred choice for their children. Mothers who had stopped using the co-op showed me their fruit bowl, which was either empty or contained only one type of fruit. This was the way they chose to show how stopping using the co-op had affected their children's consumption of produce.

In Toronto, the presence of fruit or other produce did not appear to have the same effect on household members, as was the case in Edinburgh. Only some households had fruit bowls, due to differences in climate (warmer weather) and culture (larger refrigerators): the produce was less visible, as it was kept in the fridge. Some households, such as Elise and her son, did find that they helped themselves to produce from the fridge more regularly when using the GFB.

I'm eating [produce] that... I wouldn't go to the store to get it so that is good. I like just to go into the fridge and help myself to the fruit and the carrots too... just having them in my fridge to go in whenever and grab a snack (Elise, T).

However, having produce in the fridge did not always have the same effect as the sight of a full fruit bowl, as household members had initially to make the effort to see what food was in the fridge. Then the produce was 'competing' with other food items in the fridge. However, Toronto respondents did observe that their children were eating more produce since receiving the GFB due to parental encouragement and self-motivation..

Overall, fruit was generally easier for household members to consume than vegetables, which often required someone to prepare and cook it. The influence of the projects on household members' helping themselves to produce was clearer in Edinburgh than Toronto, due to the role of the fruit bowls. The consumption of produce through household members' helping themselves to fruit did not clearly fit the different patterns of respondents' approaches to food activities. The main differences were between Toronto or Edinburgh, rather than differences relating to the approaches towards food. It

was therefore not possible to create a table clearly summarising any differences between the sub-groups of respondents.

7.3.2 The Respondents and the Presence of More Produce in the Home

Through using the projects not only were larger quantities and a wider variety of produce cooked and consumed but also a slightly different approach was taken towards how some respondents thought about and utilised the produce. Overall, even if not intended, the increased amount of produce in the home resulted in respondents' including more fresh produce in their cooking and consuming more home-made meals.

The GFB respondents found that the way the produce arrived, especially being separate from other groceries, made them more aware and conscious of it coming into their home. The process of planning meals around the produce was more obvious for the GFB respondents than the co-op respondents, as the GFB respondents did not choose the produce themselves and therefore had unfamiliar produce to use as well as their regular staple items. The co-op respondents also planned their meals around what they bought at the co-op but in a less obvious way, as they selected the produce themselves. However, they still arrived home with unfamiliar produce and larger quantities of familiar items of produce.

While there were the project differences in how the respondents chose and received their produce, as mentioned above, the changes were still largely reflected in the different approaches to food activities, as outlined below and represented in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 The presence of more produce in the home

Presence of Produce	Approaches		
	Proactive	Reactive	Unconfident
Utilisation	Easily avoided wastage	Conscious effort to avoid wastage by using up produce in the home	Difficult, needed knowledge, often gave away items of unusual produce
Changes	Began to plan meals around produce from the projects	Became more conscious of produce in their home, and included it in meals	Tried to include produce, drawback needed knowledge as well as motivation

The Proactive Approach

The proactive respondents appeared to use the produce from the project with ease, as they were often thinking of different ways to prepare the produce that was in their home. For instance, Helen, who was typical of all of the proactive respondents, was able gradually to plan her meals and shopping around the produce that arrived in the box. She always cooked more vegetable dishes the day the box arrived. The box influenced what foods were eaten and prepared.

So I will just buy whatever doesn't come in the box. But then the box will change the recipes... whatever vegetables come in it, the meal is based around those... I can kind of judge from that for the rest of the week, so I kind of plan my menus in my head on that Wednesday when [the box] comes... I'll usually splurge the day or two after I get it... So probably when I first got the box there were probably five vegetables on the side. I'll go nuts for a couple of days after I get the box and then everything will go back into its routine again (Helen, T).

The Reactive Approach

The reactive respondents, when short of time or when unmotivated to go to the shops, normally based their meals around the food that was in their home. Therefore they cooked more produce if it was present in their home, as this was convenient for them.

For example, Jo had days when she did not feel like shopping or was short of money. On these days, she made meals from what was in her home. When Jo used the co-op she noticed that these meals were more likely to include produce and to be healthier than when she had not used the co-op. Respondents were also conscious of the produce sitting in their kitchen and needing to be used to avoid wastage, unlike other foods, such as canned and frozen products, that had a longer shelf life.

...The fact that I've bought [the produce] and I know that they are there makes me give them to [the family] more... I know that sounds ridiculous but it's kind of like they're in my brain... I think that because we have more vegetables more often it's easier to have them (Sarah, E).

Over the period of using the projects, respondents began to purchase groceries to go with the produce in the home, as opposed to fitting the produce around other ingredients. The availability of the produce meant the respondents were more likely to cook and consume produce than prior to using the projects.

...I have made a lot of shepherd's pie because I have a lot of potatoes. So I guess it does influence me in what I will buy to supplement the rest of my things... I think of what I do have at home and if I have the box and I have the vegetables I'll buy something that will go along with it... [It] encourages me to eat salads because I don't normally think of salads when I go shopping but I get a lot of lettuce, [so] I've been eating more lettuce and salads (Elise, T).

The presence of the produce encouraged the reactive respondents to think about utilising it effectively, in addition to the convenience and ease of having it in the home.

The Unconfident Approach

For most co-op unconfident respondents, the items of produce that were tried required minimal cooking in terms of time and effort, such as ready to eat items of fruit or salad. The presence of produce did not make a large difference to what food was prepared, although it did lead to an increase in variety and quantity of fruit consumed.

The GFB unconfident users found it difficult to use all the items of fruit and vegetables in the box when they were not sure what they were and how to prepare them, although they did try some items. Pam was the exception and actively ‘forced’ herself to cook the produce in the box to get her money’s worth. This led to a different way of thinking about meal preparation.

... Instead of thinking “I would like to have that so I’ll buy this” I look in the box, “okay I have this in the box what can I make from it”...The stuff is sitting in the fridge, why are you thinking about ordering pizza? ...A lot of it is just about my bad habits and my daughter wanting Mr Sub [sandwiches] - it’s not on the budget. So maybe what I will do is see what is in the box and try and make our own Sub sandwiches...It is just working on myself (Pam, T).

While the presence of the produce did mean that the GFB unconfident respondents would try to use it, they did not use it to the same extent as the more confident respondents. Cooking the fresh vegetables required a level of motivation and knowledge to make meals. Sometimes extra produce or items that nobody liked were given to friends and neighbours.

7.3.3 Wider Changes and Barriers

The previous section looked at the difference that having the produce in the homes made to the respondents’ attitudes and behaviour. This section concentrates on the process of change that emerged and the differences in relation to the approaches to food activities in the context of using the food projects.

All of the respondents when using the projects had to find ways to use a larger quantity and wider selection of produce than previously. The produce led to different approaches on the part of respondents to fully use it and have some control over its use in the home, as outlined in Table 7.5. These changes are explored here with consideration to the respondents’ cooking approaches and taking into account the impact of having the produce present in the home, as discussed above. The section therefore considers the

process of change; how it came about, and how it was incorporated into the respondents' food habits.

Table 7.5 The Wider changes and benefits

Wider Changes and Benefits	Approaches		
	Proactive	Reactive	Unconfident
Ability to Change and Be Flexible	Adapted with ease, due to reduced costs, able to consume a larger quantity and wider variety of produce than previously	Produce more likely to be consumed if available in their homes but not always easy to use the produce within daily schedule	Problems utilising some produce, risk of wastage and produce / meals being rejected by household
Creativity	Experimented more. Not seen as a large change to current menu Increase in number of vegetarian dishes tried	Increase in creativity, but often regular meals prepared due to children's preferences and time. Did cook more and consumed more produce	Made some changes to food consumption. Increased fruit consumption and some small gradual increase in vegetables consumed.

Proactive Respondents

The projects enabled the proactive respondents to meet their aim of encouraging household members to consume more produce. The respondents were able to confidently use the produce through their knowledge and motivation to spend time on food activities. The changes that occurred were gradually built into the respondents' weekly routines as they progressed towards making a variety of healthy meals through using their local CFI. This change allowed the respondents more control than previously in making meals in line with their preferences.

Quantity

The affordability of the produce meant that the respondents started to include larger quantities of vegetables and salad items in their regular meals. For example, Hannah started to include more produce in her soups. The fresh items of produce were also used to replace other food items, including frozen or canned foods.

...[Since using the co-op] I can do stir-fry with fresh vegetables, which is nice because it has a completely different taste from frozen veg... I have more fresh veg around to do things with, and my husband definitely prefers fresh veg to frozen (Penny, E, prior to using the co-op her husband disliked the taste of meals made with vegetables because they had been frozen).

The projects enabled the proactive cooks to prepare their regular meals in ways that they wanted to, such as including more produce to enhance the flavour or to be healthy.

Variety

The projects offered a wide selection of fresh fruit and vegetables, which in turn encouraged the use and consumption of more unusual items of produce. The introduction of different items of produce was again gradual with respondents starting to incorporate them in their regular meals and then moved on to make the produce into new recipes on a more regular basis than they had previously. Some respondents did not see the wider variety as a large change to what they usually bought, even though they were trying new items of produce more regularly and having more variety in their diets. Perhaps this was related to the fact that they already tried new foods and recipes, but not as frequently as when they used the projects, as demonstrated by John's account of Tania's approach to the box.

[The box] suits our menu. We haven't had to change anything... we will try like pumpkin soup and leeks and the little yellow squash... So we are introduced to things that are nice to try... I think Tania's always playing around though, trying a little twist or something (John, T).

Creativity

The respondents enjoyed being able to use the produce and took the time and effort to try different recipes with the produce and to be more creative with their cooking.

...When you're cooking every day you kind of get tired of the same. I mean I have a pretty diverse menu plan, we like lots of different foods... But you still get caught in a rut every now and again. So once or twice a year before and now probably six times a year I will get the cookbook out.

What makes you do that?

...I see something in the box, either something that I don't recognise, or more often something that I've seen but would just never pick up and buy before, that I'm just not sure how to cook with it... It gives me a reason to pull out a cookbook and come out with a new idea (Helen, T).

The respondents became more adventurous, partly because of the availability of produce at low cost. Trying different items of produce and new meals slowly increased over the period and led to a few of the proactive respondents regularly trying different dishes. For instance, initially Hannah changed by including more vegetables in her regular meals then she moved on to more regular preparation of vegetable meals that she was familiar with. By the second set of interviews, she had progressed to trying to make a new, different meal every week.

...I probably experiment a bit more [using the co-op]... Like I bought chillies one week and had a chilli... It doesn't cost as much if it doesn't work out... so yeah I suppose I'm a bit more adventurous as well... At least once a week we'll try a different meal with vegetables... (Hannah, E).

Two respondents were able to fulfil their health aims of cooking more vegetarian meals. Some respondents also found that they were able to make dishes that they liked home-made but were previously cheaper to buy ready-made. For instance Penny could make ratatouille if all the produce was bought from the co-op, whereas normally it was cheaper to buy it pre-prepared or to eat something else. Using the co-op enabled her to make more food from basic ingredients and therefore more vegetarian meals.

We have about three purely vegetable meals a week, before probably one or two, but one would have probably have been a pizza which you know doesn't have meat on it but is not really a vegetable based meal. Whereas now it's actually vegetable risotto, stir-fry and things like that (Penny, E).

The proactive respondents progressed from initially including more produce in their regular meals to occasionally trying new meals and unfamiliar items of produce on a more frequent basis than previously. They developed their routine to plan meals around the produce that they bought from their local food project rather than fitting it around other foods. For instance, Penny tried bulgar wheat and couscous to accompany her vegetable dishes.

These respondents were already active in trying to eat more produce. The projects were crucial in the fact that they enabled them to have diets more in line with their preferences than previously, as well as encouraging them to be more adventurous and creative with the produce as a result of trying new items. These respondents continued to consume more or the same amounts of produce and remained committed to continuing to use their CFI. When the projects were not used, consumption of produce was reduced.

Reactive Respondents

The reactive respondents and their household also experienced an increase in the amount and variety of produce that they consumed when they used the projects, even when they had not aimed to. However, these changes were not as distinct and incremental, as in the case of proactive respondents. The reactive respondents were less likely to settle into a routine of using the produce; they were less in control and sometimes experienced some wastage. As mentioned in part one of the chapter, the reactive respondents experienced barriers that kept re-emerging in terms of what food they prepared, with regard to the time they had available, their mood and motivation, and their children's preferences.

Quantity

In common with the proactive respondents, the reactive respondents used larger quantities and unfamiliar items of produce by incorporating them into their regular meals or cooking habits. For instance, Sarah and Becky tried sweet potatoes by cooking them the same way that they cooked other potatoes – fried or mashed, rather than taking the time to find recipe ideas. The availability of produce in the home saved the time and effort of shopping for it and made it convenient to use; therefore more produce was consumed.

[The box] has given me variety...it is forcing me to cook, which is something I wasn't doing at all... The availability of the produce in the home... so [the box] is convenient because it is here, it's in the house, I'm guaranteed that these things are in my fridge automatically so I don't even think to use them, they are there and they get used. I have been more conscious about making sure they don't go to waste... (Laura, T).

However, this increase in consumption was linked with available time; there came a point when some respondents were too busy and short of time to use all the produce in their homes. The contents of the GFB became a problem, and the co-op respondents tried to buy less produce.

Variety

The reactive respondents felt that the availability of the produce encouraged them to cook more items of produce and to cook more home-made foods than previously. This was mainly due to the convenience of having the produce in the home and respondents' being more conscious of it being in their homes and needing to be used to avoid wastage. Sian, who was uninterested in cooking, found that through using the co-op she was likely to cook more. She started to purchase vegetables to roast, as they were available at an affordable cost and were something healthy that her daughter would eat. The co-op respondents would buy items to try, despite not being motivated to consume more produce: 'it just took my fancy'. When they bought a wider variety of produce this

led to different meals being tried on an infrequent basis depending on motivation and time available.

So yeah that was the thing about the food co-op that you could be more experimental. [You could] just buy things and think oh I'll do something with it during the week, inspiration will come to me... I'll buy a cauliflower and make a curry, and then end up having cauliflower cheese regardless... I've gone more plain [since I stopped using the co-op] (Jo, E).

Creativity

Some respondents began to find alternative ways to use the produce through looking up recipes or asking people for ideas. The change to trying new meals, while considered more time consuming than their usual meals and a challenge to some, was not seen as too much of a risk, as Laura illustrates;

The tomatoes, the big basket, I thought "oh my God" but, you know, I stewed them. I called my mother and said "I like canned stewed tomatoes, how do you do that?" and my mother told me how... So I've got stewed tomatoes in the freezer... Yeah so finding... what to do with the food... it has taken time to learn how to do it but yeah I'm learning (Laura, T).

The majority of the respondents did try new dishes or cooked more when using the project and they had the time available. Any changes were on a less regular basis than was the case for the proactive respondents.

Some respondents, such as Amanda and Elise in Toronto, never ventured beyond incorporating the produce into the meals that they regularly cooked, as they felt that they had no time to create new dishes. Unless respondents remembered to use the produce and had time to cook them, items sometimes piled up and were wasted or given away. It was easier and timesaving to prepare meals that respondents already knew, even if they wanted to try new recipes. In addition, new meals were sometimes not tried if there was the risk of the children not eating them, or the respondents were not in the mood to look up recipes or to cook.

...I guess it's a lack of knowledge what to do with them to make it interesting enough and not having the time to experiment and make more vegetarian meals... I would love to ...be able to eat more vegetable dishes because my body is sort of craving for it (Viv, T).

Out of the nine reactive respondents, six had stopped using their local project. Their preparation and consumption of produce returned to what it was prior to using the projects, mainly due to cost and the produce not being available in their home. They consumed less produce and tried fewer different meals, with the three GFB respondents more likely to purchase take-away foods for convenience, despite the cost involved. While the respondents increased their consumption of produce some Toronto respondents stopped receiving the box before they had established a routine of planning their meals around the produce from the box. Therefore when they did receive it, there was the risk of having wastage and they were less likely to get into the habit of using the produce effectively.

Unconfident Cooks

The increase in consumption of produce in the households of the unconfident respondents masked the fact that the unconfident co-op respondents mainly increased their consumption of fruit and items that required little preparation and few cooking skills. The Toronto unconfident respondents did try a limited variety of produce, including vegetables that needed to be prepared and cooked, as the items were in the box and needed to be used. The increase in the produce consumed was maintained only for as long as the respondents continued with the projects. By the end of the interview period only one unconfident respondent, Pam in Toronto, continued to use the project.

Quantity

The produce from the projects was received in greater quantities than the respondents were used to and required an effort to use it. While some respondents aimed to eat more healthily, to others, using the produce was essentially about trying to avoid wastage and save money. Some produce from the box was given away and some wastage occurred

through respondents not using the produce quickly enough, not liking it or not knowing what to do with it. The aim of avoiding wastage meant the respondents and households began to consume more produce, as it needed to be included in meals more frequently.

... I would go out of my way to use it [the produce from the co-op] I mean I don't like wasting stuff so I would use it. I would say right we're going to have this or fruit salad or whatever until it was used up (Jenni, E, who found she cooked and consumed more produce when using the co-op).

Rachel began to cook home-made meals to save money, as opposed to enjoying cooking the items of produce.

...I always try to use [the produce] because this was like a help with my budget, with my groceries...

I guess I am just forcing myself [to cook] because it is one major way in my family to save money... So I am trying to have a positive attitude about it, but I really hate it.

Why?

... It's like a big mental block that I don't know how to do it and I don't have the time to learn (Rachel, T, who experienced a lot of wastage).

Variety

When the unconfident respondents introduced small changes to the produce consumed, due to the variety of ingredients available through the projects, they considered the change as significant.

...The basil leaves I've never had them before, I guess they're Italian or something, so I've always seen it but never bought it because I never knew how it would taste, so I tried them and they were really great. So the seasoning, it just adds a little bit of variety which is great (Rachel, T).

Jane found trying two kiwi fruits was a major change from her usual purchases prior to using the co-op. The projects brought variety and unfamiliar produce to the households' diets. Trying new items of fruit was safer than cooking new items.

Creativity

While some respondents had tried different items of produce that were cooked in their regular meals and by their usual methods, only Pam had tried new meals with the produce. Other respondents had not tried any produce that required any cooking and tried items of fruit instead. Households that did cook some of the produce felt that using the project was good, as it 'forced' them to cook.

...If I go out there and buy those vegetables, those vegetables won't come into my house, so it forces them to be in my house so I have to cook them.

Is that a good thing?

Yeah, that's one of the things I have been thinking about...Now I cook with green peppers, red peppers and you know all that type of stuff.

And was that a conscious effort to change?

No, I have to say it's the box, because it is here - onions, the tomatoes... I am just not experimenting as much as I was with the box (Rosie, T).

As Pam put it, "having the box really makes you think of cooking which is good for me".

Reasons for not trying new meals or produce that needed to be cooked were related to factors of time, a lack of knowledge or confidence in being able to prepare the produce, and having to deal with household preferences, which had a large influence over what foods were eaten. Trying meals was perceived to be a large risk, potentially costly in terms of wastage, effort and time.

It's just the fact I don't want to try it out and waste all the stuff, you know what I mean, I would rather have someone to try it on, if I wasted it then it would be my own fault (Jane, E).

While the projects reduced the cost of experimentation, the respondents still needed to be motivated and confident to try, which only Pam was:

...I cooked my first acorn squash on Saturday ... The squash family is not my cup of tea but I figure I am paying for it, it widens my sources of good nutrients so... It's just a matter of applying myself to do a lot of cooking and preparing more salads and stuff... if you think about your health and your budget...you pay this money, you are going to want to use it all... I tried to make babagognosh with eggplant. I am not being very successful...just knowing how, I think it is just practice...(Pam, T).

Pam's high level of motivation and active effort to increase the amount of produce she and her daughter consumed had recently increased for reasons other than ordering the GFB. Her new employment involved indirectly working with people from another type of food project. She received her GFB through her employment and it was a source of discussion at her work.

Going to the co-op made Jane think about making a stir-fry, as all the ingredients were available and affordable. She kept thinking about trying it but saw her household's tastes as a barrier, as only her eldest daughter would try it. Her household's tastes and lack of support deterred her, despite the fact that she rarely made the same meal for everyone in the household, so it would have been possible to have made the meal just for her daughter and herself and something else for the others.

...I'll see something and think what is that I have seen it in before? Oh aye a stir-fry, I could make that, they've got the stuff, I'll try to experiment to see if I can make it.

So did you make a stir-fry?

No, I've never actually made it from scratch, but I've bought it like the frozen stuff. But em no, I've never tried it from scratch, I've no got that far... That is something that me and my oldest daughter would eat and nobody else would eat, so I would probably leave that until one day we were on our own, sort of thing (Jane, E).

Pam may also have had the advantage of cooking and accounting for only one other person's taste, compared with Jane in Edinburgh who needed the confidence to try new foods in an environment where her husband and one fussy child with limited food tastes were present.

The unconfident respondents mainly increased their consumption of fruit and vegetables that did not require much cooking. Some produce was cooked in meals, but there were many barriers to making more meals and gaining the confidence to do this. The unconfident cooks were limited in the benefits they could gain from the projects without a change in their skills and confidence.

7.4 Discussion

Any changes made by the respondents involved a gradual process of incorporating an increase in the quantity and variety of produce into regular preparation methods and meals consumed. This required respondents to have the knowledge and confidence to cook in a variety of ways. The respondents also benefited from being able to develop a routine of planning meals around the produce from the projects and therefore using it with minimal wastage.

The respondents' perceived level of risk in trying new meals was influenced by many different factors, from the influence of the household to daily time constraints, but, most importantly, personal motivations, skill and knowledge. Respondents' approaches towards food activities were reflected in their ability to make choices and decisions about what food the household was going to consume and in their willingness and ability to introduce and try new foods. The following section highlights the different ways, in the context of food preparation, that the projects achieved their aims of enabling and encouraging respondents and their households to eat more produce.

The projects enabled the proactive respondents to consume more produce by making it more available and affordable. This allowed the proactive respondents to purchase and use a wide variety of produce in line with their food preferences. The proactive respondents incrementally incorporated changes into their consumption patterns on a regular basis. This was done through firstly incorporating the produce into regular meals and then moving on to new unfamiliar recipes and meal ideas. Friends, family and cookbooks were good sources of information for meal ideas. The high priority of food activities did not necessarily mean that the respondents always spent much time cooking to achieve their aims of home-made and healthy meals, as they were able to adapt to time constraints. For these respondents encouragement towards consuming more produce was not an issue, as they were already motivated and had strategies that allowed them to benefit and gain from whatever produce was available from the projects. They enjoyed receiving and trying unfamiliar items of produce. Introducing more produce and unfamiliar items into the household's diet was done with ease, perhaps as they were already active in trying new foods and meals and were not deterred by different household members' tastes. It was not considered a large risk to try out new meal ideas. The cost and availability of produce appeared to previously to have been the main barrier to consuming more produce.

The reactive respondents did try new recipes, meal ideas and unfamiliar items of produce, although they experienced barriers related to time, convenience and the influence of household members. They ate a combination of foods that were ready-made and home-made and reflected a mix of both their children's and their own preferences. Even if it was not their intention, the reactive respondents increased the number of items of produce they consumed and made more home-made meals due to the ease and convenience of having the produce in the home, especially through the delivery of the GFB for the Toronto respondents. They were encouraged by the presence of the produce in the home to use it up and this played an important part in its consumption. Some respondents tried new recipes more then previously, although on an infrequent basis compared with the proactive respondents. While this group was confident to prepare and

cook foods, in order to maintain an increase in the variety and quantity of produce consumed and unfamiliar meals tried, they would have benefited from support or advice about how to do this. Ways to incorporate or try new produce more regularly within their time constraints and children's taste preferences would have helped the respondents. This was especially true for those who expressed a wish to incorporate more produce into their lives and were unsure about how to go about this within their time constraints and children's daily demands and food preferences, such as Laura and Viv in Toronto. Some respondents were content with the balance of what they ate, while others were not but did not feel they currently had the time or motivation to make changes. The reactive respondents' advantages from continuing to use the project could be dependent on finding quick ways to prepare and use produce, as well as ways to present food that both the parents and children want to consume.

The unconfident respondents experienced many barriers to increasing their consumption of produce. The co-op respondents had not intended to change the produce they ate. Their interest mainly lay in buying affordable produce, especially fruit for the household. The unconfident Toronto respondents were not entirely content with the produce and meals that they were eating, as they were initially interested in increasing their intake of produce. While fruit was easily consumed, when it came to incorporating vegetables into meals, barriers that the projects were unable to address through the sale of produce alone were experienced. Barriers accumulated and reinforced the idea that it was less of a risk, easier, safer, affordable and less stressful to continue to consume foods that the household already ate and liked rather than trying new meals that might be a 'disaster'. Having the GFB challenged this and did result in the unconfident respondents trying different items of produce, including some vegetables that required cooking. But the box also had a large risk of wastage, due to a lack of skill and confidence to prepare it for household members, especially those with particular tastes. The risk and effort required to use the produce were greatest for the respondents who were already unconfident in this area. Cost alone was not the only reason that they did not purchase more produce, as one could argue was the case for the proactive

respondents; it was related to more complex household dynamics and the respondents' own circumstances.

For the unconfident respondents, increasing the household's consumption of produce required a high level of motivation, as demonstrated by Pam, who was the only one to keep up with using the projects and consuming more variety and quantity of produce than previously. Even with Pam's high level of motivation, she sometimes struggled to keep to her eating aims. This particular group required assistance in consuming more produce and the projects were only part of the solution, as demonstrated by the fact that only one of the respondents continued to use the project after six months. The unconfident respondents needed the skills and confidence with which to try foods in safe, supportive environments.

The respondents were aware that using the projects, in their own words, 'forced' or encouraged them to consume more produce, to be creative and try new items; its presence in their homes acted as a driver to use it. The idea of being forced was perceived to be a good thing by the respondents. The vast majority of respondents enjoyed purchasing/receiving the produce from the projects. However, regardless of how long respondents used their local project, and what their approach to cooking was, when they stopped using their local project, they went back to facing the cost and availability issues that they previously experienced. This change meant that, once again, they experienced a reduction in their consumption of produce and fewer home-made meals containing a lot of produce in them.

Chapter 8 The Wider Interests in the Projects

8.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters focused on the household changes derived from using the CFIs, in terms of the food purchased and how it was utilised. This chapter looks beyond the food and nutritional implications to consider wider issues, such as the social gains from using the projects. The respondents emphasised that using their local project was different from using other shopping facilities with regard to the service, atmosphere and the social environment. For some respondents, the projects also differed from other shops in that they offered an opportunity to be involved in wider concerns relating to the community, environment, farming and the politics of food.

The first part of this chapter explores the respondents' commitment towards their local projects and their interest in continuing to use them. This relates to the way the projects operated and communicated with the respondents and how the projects connected with the respondents' wider interests. The second part of the chapter explores respondents' interests in and attitudes towards the benefit of using the projects, in the context of their experience of other food shopping outlets. The overall aim of the chapter is to obtain an understanding of why respondents continued to use their local projects and what they felt they gained from this, over and above the opportunity to purchase affordable produce.

8.2 Motivating factors for using the projects

8.2.1 Social Interaction and Communication

The Co-op

Initially, the majority of co-op respondents used their project to purchase affordable produce, but as they continued to use it this became only part of its attraction. The co-op's vibrant atmosphere due to the friendliness of the volunteers and other users, the size of the venue and the layout of the produce appealed to the respondents. The busy,

vibrant and ‘buzzing’ atmosphere of the co-op, enhanced by the fact that many people were squeezed into the small premises, made it look and feel popular; ‘it was a good thing to use as everyone else was using it’.

I think it’s good... there is always loads of people which I think is quite heartening actually - it means you're not the only person... You know, if you went in and there were just four people there to serve you. It's just the fact that if it is actually quite successful it is more of an incentive to go... that's more [of] a psychological thing (Sarah, E).

While the co-op premises sometimes led to frustration due to the constrained size of the shopping area and the long queues that often formed, the respondents commented that they accepted that this was part of going to the co-op and were prepared to accept the extra time required.

... There are so many people... kind of chatting and all that. I mean there is a different atmosphere [from other places] and it's nice in a lot of ways. I think it's not the place to go if you're really in a hurry anyway because that is not the whole ethos of it... People do want to chat and old people do want to dodder about... so it is just kind of about realising that and not expecting it to be quick (Kate, E).

The atmosphere was friendly and welcoming, with respondents often talking to each other and having a cup of tea/coffee with the volunteers. Information about local issues, events and the operation of the co-op was occasionally given in the form of a leaflet but more often was shared on an informal basis through talking to the volunteers and ECFI employees. The longer that the respondents used the co-op the more they talked to other users and the volunteers, including outside of the co-op opening hours.

...I've met a lot of my neighbours now - like the women that are [running the co-op]... I ken all of them now, whereas before I used to see them but never used to let on to them, but now it's “hi ya, what are you doing this week, are you doing the co-op?” You yack away to them... Aye there are loads of folk that I've met that just stay over there, neighbours and that. I didnae realise there was so many of them and such nice people as well... You just think, ken, living in a place like this... You just dinnae notice anyone until you get

something like this... it opens your eyes up a bit more... whereas before it would just be look down and just keep walking (Becky, E).

As Becky demonstrated, using the co-op led to some of the users being less isolated and more inclined to talk to each other outside of the co-op as well as in the co-op itself. Respondents met more local residents and developed a sense of belonging to part of the community project. Knowing more people in the local area made them feel welcome when using the co-op facilities. From talking to the volunteers and users at the co-op, some of the respondents attended other local events, such as a 'community gala day' and training at the then new local computer centre. A few respondents were previously interested in community activities through their children and some were already involved in other local community groups.

Many respondents felt that the friendly atmosphere of the co-op was related to the fact that it was run by the local community for the community. The majority of co-op respondents were keen to continue supporting the co-op because of its community links and social function, as they believed it was important for the local area and it was 'part of their community'.

...Even though I'm not the shopper [in my household]. I wanted to support it; a local community initiative. I was actually on placement at a health project and they've got [a food co-op] so I knew about that, so I just went over to see what it was like... just to be nosey (Sarah, E).

Some respondents expected that the co-op would operate differently to other places selling produce, due to their notion of a community or local venture. Other respondents did not have any expectations about the way the co-op should operate but noticed that it had a friendly atmosphere.

...You can tell it's more community-orientated because the people that are serving are quite friendly and the people themselves seem to know each other...I don't really live there, so I don't know anybody, but yeah it's certainly much more friendly (Jenni, E).

Four respondents thought about volunteering at the co-op as a way to give something back and show appreciation of the work it did, as Hannah explained,

I think that is partly why the voluntary thing is attractive to me because well I think maybe I can put something back into it as well [as using it] (Hannah, E).

However, for most of the respondents, volunteering did not fit in with their households' schedule and they required childcare facilities that were not available. Being a user was their active form of support for their local community venture. Overall, the feelings towards supporting a community venture led respondents to show their continued support.

...I feel if I use somewhere else that's one less customer and less of a chance of it being there. If they've less custom then there is more chance of them being shut down so I support it...(Trish, E, who placed an order with the co-op if she could not go to it, despite the inconvenience this caused her).

Despite all the talking with other users and volunteers, sharing of local news and their commitment towards their local co-op, respondents had limited knowledge about the way the wider co-op project operated and about ECFIs work in Edinburgh. Respondents only knew about other co-ops from friends who used them. Therefore, support and interest about ECFI was not created and maintained. The majority of respondents were unclear about how the co-ops operated, why they operated in their local area instead of other areas of the city and how long they would operate for, as Sheena stated.

They're obviously just trying to provide a service that we've no got... It's fantastic but I'm always a bit worried that it's maybe not going to be there in a couple of months time, and then it's just a hassle... You open up in... what people sort of class as a run-down area or whatever and some people just don't use it: they're not interested... Everything comes and goes... (Sheena, E).

Four respondents had concerns about why co-ops operated in what they considered to be run-down, disadvantaged areas, and questioned their existence, not in relation to health benefits but in relation to one's right to purchase basic food items, such as produce.

...I think [food co-ops are] put in working class places, as if nobody else needs them... It's a filthy word 'community' now because it's only associated with schemes, poverty and depression. If the government uses the word 'community', you know you're living in a place where you get murders...(Sarah, E, There had been two recent murders in the local area at the time of the interviews, with the media portraying the area negatively, as a rough and deprived community).

The perceived lack of information led to some respondents being frustrated by the way the co-op operated, especially with regard to its opening hours and stock policy, such as why certain items of produce were frequently unavailable. Despite Kate's interest in the project, she never knew why certain items of stock were unavailable and thought it was the co-op's fault (someone was forgetting to order some items of produce), when actually ECFI had an availability and quality issue with the suppliers. When the respondents had to shop elsewhere for missing items of produce, the inconvenience reduced their commitment to attend the co-op. They thought the lack of stock was due to the incompetence of the person ordering it.

Respondents were unaware of where the stock came from, which meant some respondents thought it might contain fewer pesticides than compared to supermarket produce. Conversely, other respondents had reservations about where the produce came from, especially when some produce perished quickly and was cheaper than produce purchased elsewhere.

... I also became quite curious about where [the produce] was coming from as well and whether it was organic and what the deal was basically on it, on buying the stuff or how it was being distributed (Sian, E).

The respondents' limited knowledge of ECFI and the role of their local food project was apparent from when they initially heard about their local co-op. Initially some respondents were confused about who could use the co-op, they were unsure whether they could use the co-op, as they did not live in the immediate local area or, although managing on a tight budget, were not on benefits. This confusion continued for a couple of the respondents, despite the volunteers explaining that everyone was welcome. On one occasion at the co-op, two users joked that only local people were allowed to use the co-op. The respondent from outside the area was unsure whether or not they were serious and felt uncomfortable about the situation. In addition, she felt that her household income was higher in relation to the people living in the local area.

... That was the week as well that I did the really big shop and people were commenting on it... I had this thing about being out of the scheme, and then I felt really bad about spending more money than everybody else... Here I am using this scheme when I've probably, actually got more income than a lot of people and I felt really guilty. It wouldn't be enough to put me off and [the volunteer] said to me enough times [that everyone is always welcome]... Then I thought well I need this, I would be buying this, with the exception of maybe a couple of luxury items...(Hannah, E)

Some respondents found that when they told their friends about the co-op, the friends were unsure about whether they could use it. Sian was surprised that her friend thought that she could not use the co-op because she did not live in the area,

...I thought oh, because you would never think that about... the [Sunnyhill] Tesco's that it belonged to [Sunnyhill] and you could not shop there [if you didn't live there]...(Sian, E).

Sarah believed it was difficult for people, especially outside the local area, to attend the co-op for the first time, as the experience was so different from using other shopping facilities.

I think it must be scary to go [to the co-op]... if you are not bolshie or don't know the rules of the game at least. If you go to the supermarket, you know what you're going to get... You might not want to go in to the co-op the first time and... the police standing outside greeting you, "I was in the cells on Saturday, hello!" Not that I'm saying the police shouldn't be there, it's lovely... (Sarah, E. The local police officer regularly volunteered at the co-op and liked to chat with the users).

Overall, the co-op resulted in the respondents making more local social contacts than previously and being aware and involved in more community events and news, all of which contributed to keeping the respondents interested and committed to support their local co-op. Some respondents felt they developed a sense of being part of the community. The sharing of information did not extend to include news relating to ECFI's work. This meant that their interest in ECFI and food issues beyond the community were not raised or part of the direct appeal of using their local project.

The GFB

The GFB respondents had limited social contact with the people involved with the GFB at their local drop-off site. Most respondents knew or were already friendly with their co-ordinator and talked with them regularly, but this did not necessarily lead to regular conversations with other users in the group. Some co-ordinators were understanding and flexible with regard to payments and delivery arrangements, while others were not. Where respondents knew the co-ordinators prior to ordering the box, they were more inclined to continue to use the project and they had fewer problems with their co-ordinators than the other respondents did.

Problems arose with co-ordinators who ordered the boxes irregularly, as this made respondents less inclined to remain with the project; good social relations between the users and the volunteer co-ordinator did not develop. Problems with a few of the co-ordinators about ordering and payment arrangements, led to some respondents wanting to order the box directly from the initiative themselves, therefore missing out on the middleman and community aspect. These respondents did not know their co-

ordinators well before they ordered the GFB and did not see ordering the box as a social activity.

I wish they didn't have it that you have to have five boxes all delivered at once, like it would be nice if you could just call up and order for yourself. If I were able to call myself I would just do it... It's like having to rely on... a whole [line] of people... If I was really truly relying on the box and extremely broke... and I didn't get it then what would I do for food? So I would like it to be consistent... I think they should have okay this date you pick them up on a regular basis but they don't have that... (Elise, T).

The convenience, along with ease of ordering, meant some respondents quickly established a routine of ordering and receiving the box, thereby becoming more committed to ordering it on a regular basis and towards being involved in the initiative. It saved the need to shop for produce elsewhere. The process of ordering, paying for and collecting the box was usually considered straightforward.

...It is great, I think it is convenient. You cannot under-estimate convenience in this world. It's a huge factor in how I think, so it's a godsend (Cath, T).

The GFB's communication with its users about the project was regular and more formalised than the co-op's. The regular newsletter provided information about the initiative, recipes, healthy eating advice, farming and environmental information. While a few respondents never read the newsletter, most at least skimmed it and sometimes the recipes were tried or used for meal ideas. Some respondents who were confident cooks began to try the recipe in the newsletter for any unusual items of produce. In this sense, the newsletter had an indirect educational component to it. This way of providing information about the project, while a passive form of communication, was regular and suited most respondents in the context of their busy lives. Most respondents liked the newsletter and it enabled them to be informed about the project, health and food issues, if they so wished.

... Getting the newsletter, it's like even the African food basket, when they give you your basket they give you recipes too, you know, so you learn things and [other] things about the community too (Amanda, T).

...The other information is interesting too. For instance... how the farmers have had to get the produce off the fields quickly before the bugs ate them, those kind of things - that as a city boy I'm completely out of touch with... The reality of farming, I don't know about those kinds of things. I just know 'that is the kind of apple I want, that price is too much so I get this apple'. That's the extent of my knowledge...(John, T).

In comparison with the co-op respondents, the GFB respondents did not have the same location and financial concerns about who could receive a box and participate in the project, perhaps reflecting the fact that there was no single location and the drop-off sites were spread throughout the city. The respondents who received the subsidies appreciated them and no one mentioned feeling stigmatised due to receiving them. Only Rosie, who did not receive a subsidy, was deterred from re-ordering the box due to the actions of her co-ordinator. The co-ordinator to be helpful placed the produce into carrier bags that were incidentally from a low-cost supermarket rather than letting Rosie collect the whole box herself. The other co-ordinators let the respondents take the produce from the box they ordered and bag it themselves. Rosie felt that receiving the produce in the carrier bags implied that she was receiving handouts or buying low-quality produce rather than the good quality produce in the box.

...[The co-ordinator is] the support worker downstairs and it makes it look like I'm receiving sort of handouts, you know what I mean? It doesn't come in the nice little grocery... food box it comes in these bags of Price Chopper or Food Basics. I didn't like that too much... It would be nice to see the big box come to your house... I think it makes a difference (Rosie, T).

Where the GFB respondents knew or developed contact/friendships with the volunteer co-ordinator they were more likely to be interested in continuing with using the project. They were also more likely to consider participating in the project as a social activity, which they incorporated into their weekly routines. The newsletter played an important role in keeping the respondents informed of the project, which contributed in building

commitment and maintaining their connection with the project.

8.2.2 Wider Interests Related to Using the Projects

Co-op

To varying degrees, four co-op respondents had views about the politics of food, preferring to reduce their use of supermarkets in favour of supporting small shops, organic foods and for more environmentally friendly farming practices. Of these respondents, only Sian had previously put her beliefs into action by trying to shop regularly in alternative places to supermarkets and buy organic groceries. Sian had also given some thought to the current development of the sale of organic food.

...The use of the word organic now really annoys me because it has shifted so much in meaning. You know it's just slapped on a label... There are certain companies... they have organic and they have their soil association certificate and a number. You get the feeling that somebody has in fact gone through what they use and given it some kind of green light for... what it is calling itself... When you sort of see...frozen Safeway organic carrots or something you think well hang on a minute, who says? And what does this word mean? (Sian, E)

This interest in healthy, organic foods, along with an interest in community projects, led to Sian using the co-op. She wanted to see if it sold affordable organic produce and if it grew its own produce. However, at the time of the interviews, both Sian's restricted budget and time prevented her from using health food shops and avoiding large supermarket chains.

GFB

Most GFB respondents knew that they were part of a citywide project and how their co-ordinator fitted into this. Purchasing the box was an opportunity for respondents to be a part of a project that supported their beliefs and attitudes, which made them feel good about participating in it.

...I am sold, definitely... I want to support the organisers and their intentions too... They are offering a service to the local community and the individual... and a good service too... I like the different sizes of the boxes, it is very conducive to people's needs...(Cath, T).

A few respondents emphasised that the GFB was not only for people on a low income, but also for those concerned about their health and wider food issues. Helen and John both reported that one reason for purchasing the box was to help the project to support people on low incomes and local farmers. If it financially supported Helen and John, then they would reconsider whether to purchase it.

... It's one of my fears that it is supporting me, I don't want to do this if they are. And there is a good chance that the food in the box, I just have the feeling that it would be more healthy than in the grocer... also because you know they're buying it from local farmers (Helen, T).

The GFB met a variety of people's needs and concerns. The more their interest extended beyond the low price of the boxes, the more the project appealed to them and sustained their interest. Half of the respondents believed the GFB appealed to people with a wide range of interests, from those who wanted to make healthy food choices, to those who wanted to support the local farmers, politically orientated people and people who wanted convenience and affordable prices.

John would not stop using the project, even though his co-ordinator sometimes irritated him, as he remained committed to the overall concept of the project and liked to maintain and build social relations within the housing group to which he belonged. He thought that the initiative was good for communities and something he should support because if he stopped using it he would be contributing to pulling his drop-off point out of the wider initiative, which would affect the good of the wider project.

[She] is a bit of a character... She calls a lot, that's our only complaint; she is nice but a pain...sometimes. But I guess she is a good person for the job because it does get her connected to the people who participate in it and I know she thrives on that. So in terms of our community and my belief of

community building it's a good fit but it can be annoying because I don't need to have all the connection (John, T).

In contrast to the co-op respondents, most of the GFB respondents had an interest in community and wider issues prior to using the project, either recently or throughout the years, particularly those who regularly used health food shops. Respondents liked the fact that the project was helping different people, from city dwellers on low incomes, to small-scale Ontario farmers. Their interests in wider food issues were reinforced and updated through the information provided in the GFB newsletters. Respondents could financially support something they believed in without it costing too much.

... I think [the box] is a good deal and there is also the ethical aspect - what FTT and FoodShare are trying to do for the city... and what it all stands for - addressing food issues and the economics too. I can't make big moral ethical stands [financially] with a lot of stuff, but this is just my little way of saying... that I don't want to support grocery stores because of what they are offering... it's a moral decision I'm trying to set for myself (Pam, T).

Buying from local farmers and farmer markets was a topical issue in Toronto, unlike in Edinburgh. There were adverts around the city and on TV to encourage people to buy Ontario grown produce. Some respondents felt strongly about supporting and continuing with their local project because of their wider concerns. However, not everyone transferred these interests into the reason why they used their project. Three GFB respondents liked to support small-scale farmers, but they were not stated as motivating factors in the use of the GFB project. For example, Laura talked about her connection to local farms outside of Toronto but saw the reason for receiving the box being related to the low cost and convenience. Another two respondents' wanted to receive a free box and were not concerned with community or wider interests. This did not change throughout the study. Some GFB respondents chose to use their local projects due to them offering an affordable way to be involved in supporting their wider interests. When people were connected to the project beyond the benefit of receiving affordable produce, it reduced the feeling of using a project that only existed for people on low-incomes.

8.3 The Projects Compared to Other Shopping Facilities

8.3.1 The Projects

Most co-op respondents regarded the co-op as more than just a shop in their community. The distinction related to their understanding about why the co-op existed. The social contact, community spirit and friendliness were important factors in making it more than a shop. It was a place where people shared a common objective and was 'full of atmosphere'.

... It's different from a shop, it's that awful word 'a bit of a community thing' isn't it really? It's friendly, it's nice, it's spirited, a sense of solidarity, I don't know maybe I imagine it because I'm a bit sentimental anyway (Sarah, E).

Well I know it is a shop but it's not like 'okay I'm going to do the shopping' kind of thing. It's more fun in a way because you know the people there. If you did have half an hour to spare you could sit and talk before you begin your shopping. They don't have time for you in Tesco's (Trish, E).

Some GFB respondents did not consider buying the box to be 'shopping', for the practical reason that respondents did not personally select the items of produce.

It's not like shopping; it's hardly an effort... It's a phone call and then a trip downstairs, it's like calling a grocery store and telling them what you want and [they] deliver it to you. It's great... You don't even have to leave home and you're guaranteed food. You can't go wrong with that one (Laura, T).

For others, it was a form of shopping that provided an alternative to profit-making supermarkets. It offered the opportunity to express their beliefs and views regarding their opposition to multinational companies.

[I'm] very much sure it is shopping but it is away from the commercial outlets, it is very much shopping at a cheaper and lower rate than at commercial outlets (Cath, T).

While most respondents from both projects envisaged the projects as different to other shops, their feeling of involvement through seeing themselves as a user, customer or member varied. The co-op had a membership book and everybody who used the co-op was in theory a member. The GFB did not have the same approach but it was a large group, in which everyone could be more or less involved, if they wished. Most respondents from both projects described themselves as users and did not see themselves as members because they did not feel involved in the project in the sense that they did not volunteer in any capacity.

Probably a user, I don't feel like I am a customer because I don't even deal with them... And to me a member would be somebody who is involved with it, with the GFB, so I don't feel like that either so I would have to say that I just use it...(Viv, T).

Two of the co-op respondents, who had unconfident approaches to food, as outlined in chapter 7, thought they were neither users nor members: rather, they were customers. The co-op was a friendly local shop rather than being linked to the community. These respondents did not hold a sense of commitment to using the co-op; it was an affordable shop to them.

It's quite a friendly shop I suppose yeah... I'm just interested in price, quality and nutrition... Em, I am a customer (Jenni, E).

The other respondents thought of themselves as more than 'just' customers because going to the co-op was different to using shops.

...I suppose somewhere in the middle: half a member and half a customer. I don't completely feel quite a member but no' just a customer... I suppose [a member would be] more involved in it whereas at the moment I just don't have time. I think we are all members to a certain extent because it is a community venture so you don't feel completely like a customer, you do feel like you have a vested interest in it (Penny, E).

The GFB respondents who felt that they were members were likely to be interested in wider community issues. The co-op respondents who referred to themselves as members were not more involved in the projects than the other respondents, but saw it as a place to talk to others that was friendlier than shopping elsewhere. They were the individuals who also saw themselves as being part of the local community (and, in the case of two respondents, who were locally connected through living in the actual building where the co-op was held).

...I'm a member of the co-op aye, definitely I'm a member because I always hang about...it's like a wee club... You all ken each other standing blether and that, nae it's more, it's definitely community orientated (Becky, E).

8.3.2 The Shopping Facilities

The Co-op

The majority of co-op respondents believed there was a difference between the service and atmosphere of their usual shops and that found in the co-op. For some respondents the co-op fitted in with their notion of what a community shop would be like, whereas for others, their experience of using the co-op led them to see it as different to other shops. The friendly atmosphere of the co-op was contrasted with the picture respondents portrayed of other shopping facilities. The co-op was non-profit making and supported the communities it served, whereas the supermarkets were seen as profit making and did not always offer a friendly service. While some respondents did not enjoy shopping for food, nobody thought the co-op was a bad experience, particularly compared to using the shops.

There was a difference in how the respondents felt and reacted to queuing at the checkout, taking their children, and talking to people in the different shopping environments. Behaviours that were acceptable at the co-op were not always acceptable at supermarkets.

It annoys me more in Tesco's just because there are always queues... It bugs me in a supermarket when they are making profit hand over fist, but they're too tight to put extra people on the checkouts, whereas down there I know it's volunteers so I know...they're going as fast as they can... Okay it's annoying not being able to go straight through but that's life isn't it? I don't mind that time, it might even stretch to an hour (Kate, E).

...They were really helping me and friendly, in a way that [they are] not at the supermarket. [The supermarket is] all anonymous and you pass people and nobody speaks to you. So from that point of view [the co-op] it feels like a community I suppose that's what I'm saying. It's nice. I like that, it's really friendly... (Hannah, E).

To an extent, the co-op was considered to be like going back in time; it corresponded to their idea of what a local community shop used to be like, as Sarah described.

[The co-op] it's just a lot friendlier, it's more like what you imagine shopping to be in the olden days... I like the thing that you're supposed to bring a plastic bag, we try to be quite green and you know you can bring your egg boxes back...I like all that sort of stuff. Just an awareness of what people are doing, an awareness of what shopping is about rather than just the ridiculous... other stuff [that] I can't even express what it is about... Shopping at supermarkets just tends to be about image or something, people with their trolleys having a lifestyle, it just becomes a completely different lifestyle...(Sarah, E).

As well as being friendly, the co-op was considered to have no hidden agendas, as they were interested in the community and not trying to make a profit.

[The co-op is] just more relaxed, friendly... I mean I know there is a different feel but it is very difficult to actually put your finger on why it feels different. It's because everybody there is a volunteer...although they're selling stuff, they're not trying to sell it to you. They are there for you to take advantage of the co-op and go up and buy this fruit and veg. Nobody is trying to ram things down your throat or persuade you to buy this latest deal that they've got going, which you feel [is the case] with supermarkets (Penny, E).

In contrast, the supermarkets were seen as unscrupulous and too profit-orientated. There appeared to be an element of trust in what the co-op was selling, as it was part of the

community and existed to help the local area. This difference was also reflected in the way respondents spoke about the produce that was on sale at supermarkets, with limited trust in its quality and origin.

...I just don't believe them...[that] it's organic, after spending years shopping in supermarkets. I really distrust their vegetables. I just think it's not normal for them to have a million tomatoes that all look the same and don't ever seem to ripen properly... They're not like normal food at all, it's just horrible...(Kate, E).

An important difference between the co-op and the supermarkets was not only the friendliness and trustworthiness but the acceptance and attention given to any children who attended the co-op. When the co-op was very busy it could be stressful having the children in such a small space and generally parents tried always to shop without their children. However, the respondents felt it was acceptable to bring their children to the co-op; when they did so, people took the time to speak and play with them. The children were able to participate in the shopping which was considered as a good way to involve to interest them in food activities, in the hope that they would then be more likely to consume the items that they selected. Selecting foods in the supermarkets was usually discouraged in because of the reaction of other shoppers and the high cost involved when children selected expensive goods.

...When she is in the co-op it's really nice because she participates, like putting the carrots in the basket, then the potatoes. I think that's really good for them to get them used to normal food and eating it and enjoying it... In the supermarkets you can't let them go round and pick things up, you would be kicked out (Jo, E).

The GFB

Most GFB respondents were positive about their other shopping experiences, which they did not usually compare with receiving the GFB: as collecting the box was not considered to be like shopping. The GFB did not involve selecting, requiring service and

assistance and queuing to purchase foods, as shopping did. Different supermarkets in Toronto were seen to be for different people on the grounds of not only their income, but also the constraints on their time and their budgetary skills. The more expensive supermarkets were for people with high incomes who lacked time to shop around and wanted a large selection of foods, including convenience foods. The cheaper supermarkets were for people with low incomes and those who budgeted well. Some respondents saw themselves as being good at budgeting, as opposed to having a low income. They regularly used the cheaper supermarkets and then if they wanted a better selection of food, they would occasionally go to a more expensive supermarket. Convenience shops were considered to be for people who lacked access to other facilities because of transport and time barriers. All shops, apart from health food shops, had a similar level of friendliness and helpfulness, although the cheaper supermarkets had fewer services, such as not having bag-packers or a fresh food counter.

...At the No Frills you don't have an up-scale atmosphere... but you get the best prices so it doesn't really bother me that much. And if I want to get something special then you go to a great big LobLaws or something, but for everyday items I find the shop great (Viv, T).

Health food shops were considered to offer the most helpful service and the employees were the most approachable. However, it was emphasised that health food stores were for people with higher incomes than most of the respondents had. GFB respondents' comments on using health-food shops were similar to those made by co-op respondents regarding the friendly and welcoming atmosphere and service offered. Some respondents thought that other people using the health-food shops shared similar views and food concerns about organic/healthy foods and the politics of foods. This was similar to the way that some co-op respondents felt connected through their shared support for their local co-op. Three of the proactive GFB respondents who held wider interests began to put their beliefs into action by using fewer commercial shops, as well as buying the GFB. These three respondents tried to move away from bulk shopping at supermarkets and to shop elsewhere, as they all wanted to support smaller shops and

more local business ventures.

I'm really trying to avoid the big grocery stores... Even now I will buy my milk at the variety store so that I don't need to go and try and support that business. It's a little bit more expensive... I have been going to health food stores over the last couple of months since September, I'm trying to shift what I eat, and I am trying to eat better... It's becoming more conscious of just the [supermarket] chains and how they operate... how they do their business (Pam, T).

8.3.3 Project Continuation

The majority of respondents viewed the projects as offering an alternative experience to other shopping facilities. This experience was considered to be positive, with the majority of respondents willing to continue using them. However, despite this commitment and interest in the projects, over half of the respondents had stopped using their local project within the first six-months of starting to use them.

Most of the respondents who stopped using the projects claimed that they would return if their current circumstances changed, such as working different and fewer hours, their household's health improved or children's activities changed.

Of the six respondents who discontinued using the co-op, the main problem was that it took just one activity to change the time they had available to access the co-op in the few hours that it was open, regardless of their level of support for it. In addition to this, two co-op respondents ordered produce from the co-op when they could not attend in person in order to receive affordable produce and because they wanted to show their support. This left three co-op users who visited it regularly.

The five respondents who stopped receiving the GFB were from two co-ordinator drop-off points. Both of the co-ordinators had stopped operating, yet the respondents were unaware of this. Of these five respondents, two stopped ordering the GFB before the co-

ordinators had stopped due to the GFB being unsuitable to their households' particular taste preferences. The other three respondents were waiting for their co-ordinator to place the next order and were unaware that she had decided to stop volunteering. These three respondents would have liked to continue ordering the GFB.

Respondents stopped using the projects for a mix of practical and personal reasons. The respondents who finished because of practical reasons would return to the project if they could and were still interested in their local project. The respondents who had stopped for personal reasons were mainly unconfident cooks who had limited interest in the local and wider community aspects of the projects. The GFB had the problem that if the co-ordinator stopped volunteering, respondents lost their contact with the project, unless they were willing to contact the project directly or someone else was willing to be a volunteer co-ordinator.

8.4 Discussion

8.4.1 Beliefs and Interests

At the co-op, respondents' interests in local community activities or wider notions of community development could be fulfilled. From talking and participating in the co-op, respondents met people with similar attitudes about supporting the local community. Using the project also led to some co-op respondents being more interested in community issues and others becoming involved in local events and activities. The co-op was a means to meet people and network. Some respondents developed a sense of belonging to the local area and becoming more involved in the community.

Based on the people they met at their drop-off site, and more regularly through the contents of the regular newsletters that kept them informed of the initiative and community, food and farming issues the GFB respondents felt that others shared their interests. The GFB respondents could be part of social networks that were focused on sharing an interest in local farming and environmental issues, interest in politics of food and wider notions of community building covering the Toronto region. Social contact

with people from the drop-off sites was limited compared with the co-ops. However, friendships that were already formed were maintained and, to an extent, new social contacts were made.

The projects allowed the respondents to participate in something in which they believed in and about which they felt strongly, such as local community issues (co-op respondents) and community and wider food issues (GFB respondents). These interests, beyond financial considerations, meant that most of the respondents from both projects did not feel like customers, but rather members or users of the projects. Respondents' attitudes and beliefs kept them interested in the projects. If the respondents were to continue to act on these concerns, they needed a consistent regular flow of information and community links to sustain their interests and to raise further their concerns about these issues.

Some of the respondents' social gains from continuing to use their local CFI related to benefits that could be considered to contribute to building social capital. These benefits ranged from respondents increasing the number and extent of their social contacts in the community, being involved in a community project or being part of an initiative where people shared beliefs and interests. These benefits varied in relation to the projects' different designs and the respondents' interest in their local project and contact with the volunteers and other users.

The potential role of CFIs in having positive effects on local communities and contributing towards building social capital was highlighted by Webster (1998, p.5) and Dowler (2000). However, the contribution that the projects had towards building social capital was not an aim of the study and not fully explored, due to the scope of the research data collected. As the research findings highlighted some social gains associated with building social capital it is potentially an area for further investigation in the future.

8.4.2 Communication

The different ways that the projects communicated with their users reflected how they operated and further influence the level of interest in the projects.

The co-op had no formalised information flow. This derived from the fact that the co-op's volunteers had the dual role of managing the co-op and relaying any information to the users. The co-op volunteers formed the primary link between ECFI, the co-op and the users. The volunteers facilitated the friendly atmosphere by, for example, offering cups of tea to the respondents. This friendly atmosphere led to respondents talking to more local people than prior to using the co-op. The co-op offered more face-to-face contact than the GFB. While community links grew stronger and information about local issues was shared, respondents did not feel any more informed over the period about the co-op and the wider involvement of ECFI. Consequently, respondents were unclear about how the co-op operated, where the produce originated and how the project planned to progress. A few respondents were interested in political food issues, yet this was not explored by ECFI. As each co-op operating within ECFI was to be self-managed by the community, it was not always seen as necessary by ECFI to convey messages about the initiative and its structure, leading to inconsistency of information.

The GFB had a more formalised method of communicating with the respondents, reflecting its structure. The newsletter allowed any messages to go direct to the respondents. The co-ordinator could focus on arranging a time and place for delivery and collection of the box. The information was relayed through the newsletter and allowed the respondents the time to digest it at their leisure and led to most of them having a greater understanding, than the co-op respondents, about how the project operated. The information kept some respondents motivated to continue with the project. The GFB offered a connection from the farmer and producer, to the Field-To-Table initiative, to the user. This connection increased knowledge and helped remove preconceptions, for instance, that affordable produce means poor quality and substandard goods, by giving information about the origin of the produce.

8.4.3 The Projects Compared to Shops

For the co-op respondents, the co-op was similar to shops as they went along, selected goods, queued and paid for the produce. However, it was different and more attractive to respondents, as they were supporting a community venture, which was something some of them wanted to do. Secondly, it was friendlier than shops and provided an opportunity to meet new people, talk and catch up on local news and events, if they wanted to. They also felt comfortable bringing their children. Lastly, they believed that nobody was trying to 'cheat' them or push products on to them.

The GFB experience was generally not compared to shopping, as the respondents did not select all the items of produce. In the case of the GFB, receiving the box offered an alternative to large supermarket chains, offering something more local that supported Ontario farmers and local communities. It fitted some respondents' interest in small-scale farming and community building.

8.4.4 Project Continuation

In both projects, respondents most interested in continuing with the projects were likely to use the projects because of wider or community interests or, in the case of the co-ops, because they lived close to the facility. These respondents were also most likely to consider themselves members of the projects. In contrast, those only interested in affordable produce were the most likely to consider themselves customers and over the long term unlikely to continue with it. They were least likely to have made social contacts through the projects and likely to have an unconfident approach towards food.

Despite the number of respondents wanting to continue with the projects, half stopped using them. Practical as well as personal issues remained a barrier to benefiting from using the projects, especially in relation to available time and other commitments.

It appears that, for the respondents to be interested in continuing with the project in the long-term the benefits from the projects have to be more than accessibility, convenience

and affordability. It helps to have something else that appeals to the users and keeps them motivated to use the projects. This includes face-to-face contact and the opportunity to support a local venture that they feel part of, or an opportunity to participate in an initiative that supports and reinforces their own beliefs and attitudes. Practical barriers also need to be addressed, such as working out ways to resolve respondents' time restrictions, where possible, and addressing group problems with volunteer co-ordinators pulling out of the project.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the processes by which the CFIs sought to achieve their primary aim of increasing consumption among users, and to assess the extent to which this goal was achieved. This chapter reflects on the research design, methods and analysis undertaken in the course of the study. The research findings and their significance with regard to the respondents' use of the projects and the approaches taken by the CFIs will be highlighted. From these research findings, recommendations have been made in relation to policy, practice and possible areas requiring further research.

9.2 The Research Design and Methods

9.2.1 Case Study

The case study approach was invaluable in providing an insight into the daily dynamics of the projects and developing detailed knowledge and understanding about them. It allowed access to multiple sources of evidence that contributed to my awareness of the daily intricacies of the projects and the wider initiatives of which they were a part. Collecting data from multiple sources allowed for triangulation of the findings, which assisted in developing a more in-depth understanding about the initiatives, in answering queries that arose and in validating the data. For example, being able to look at documents, notes and minutes from meetings helped in understanding the reasons behind actions that I was observing and being aware of daily processes and events through observations helped to understand why certain decisions were being made. While case studies are time consuming and require continual collection of data (Robson 1993), I was able to be flexible in how I went about collecting the data. This enabled me to experience a wide range of daily scenarios/events at the projects. It allowed an insight into the projects, which would not have been possible to the same extent using any other methods in order to unravel the processes and consider the importance of them. Being

involved in the projects allowed information and questions to flow as I had the opportunity to raise issues as they emerged if they were relevant to what was happening at the time. Such queries might not have occurred in an interview setting. It also helped to establish and maintain contact with employees and volunteers, which was essential, particularly when trying to recruit user respondents. It helped me to gain a sense of context when the user respondents were referring to situations and experiences of the projects during their interviews.

9.2.2 Cross-National Perspective

The cross-national, comparative perspective, through two projects in different countries, greatly enhanced my understanding of the role of history and values in the way the projects operated. It provided an opportunity to look at similarities and differences in the projects while also realising the cultural influences. Without including the Toronto project, I would have missed the importance of values and history in shaping operations. It allowed an understanding that the projects did not operate as they did because of practical reasons or chance, rather it related to different approaches to community development and reasons that were more complex, as I will expand on later in this chapter.

The projects provided alternative perspectives on how to approach the aim of enabling and encouraging low income communities to consume more produce through the local sale of affordable produce. Compared to Edinburgh, the Toronto initiative was larger and had a wider range of projects operating. However, the actual projects studied were comparable in their aims, approaches, daily processes and involvement of employees, volunteers and users. The influence of the different cultures became particularly apparent when interviewing the users, for example in influencing in what meals were prepared and how food was stored. The comparison encouraged thinking about why these approaches existed in each country, what was unique to them and whether they would be able to operate anywhere else.

9.2.3 Panel Study

The panel study proved a good method for exploring the respondents' experience of the projects. The method aimed to capture their experience over the first six-months of using the projects. It provided an opportunity to examine any changes in purchasing and consumption and explore the processes behind this. Covering a six-month period with a panel study approach had not been possible during my MSc research on CFIs due to the time-scale required and had not, to my knowledge, been carried out by any other study on the use of CFIs.

9.2.4 Sample

The most challenging part in identifying a suitable sample was the recruiting of suitable user respondents. Due to the designs of the projects, project employees did not directly know users who might take part in the study. The project contacts that I made provided opportunities for me to meet the volunteers, who then assisted in finding respondents who fitted the sample criteria.

It was essential during this study to be flexible in order to adapt to the respondents' time commitments. Recruiting and maintaining the sample for the interviews was time consuming, frequently requiring considerable patience on my part, as plans often changed. However, the time spent recruiting and staying in touch with the respondents did have its rewards in achieving low refusal and attrition rates. The low refusal rate for participating in the study may have been due to the process of carefully recruiting the sample of users through face-to-face contact whenever possible and by being clear about the research aims. People appeared to be keen to participate when they knew more about the study and what was involved, and that I had the backing of the projects involved. The low attrition rate, one person from each project, was in part due to being flexible about arrangements and maintaining contact through several phone calls to confirm participation, arrange and confirm meetings and to change interview times at short notice to suit the respondents. The two respondents who did not do second face-to-face interviews did participate in telephone interviews, which allowed me to briefly cover the

main points of the topic guide, such as their current use of the projects and the reasons behind this.

The samples in both countries needed to be recruited in a short space of time. In Scotland, this was due to trying to complete the research before going to Toronto and, when there, it was essential to keep to the timeframe in order to complete the second interviews before the Christmas holiday period. The pressure to keep within the time scale was also heightened by the need to cover a cold and warm time of year at each location, as the seasonal temperatures could have influenced the type and quantity of produce eaten. It assisted in comparing the findings between countries, as they both experienced similar weather conditions. Despite the time constraints when recruiting the samples, it did result in a sufficient number of respondents that participated to provide in-depth data.

To gain more of an insight into the food activities within the home, interviewing partners where possible could have assisted in understanding the household dynamics and relationships involving food. While I did set out to include partners in a shorter interview, this was not possible due to their commitments elsewhere and their limited interest in the study. Only one partner participated in the study with his wife. For future studies, I would, where possible, specify the inclusion of a partner as a requirement when recruiting and selecting users. I would also include it in the letter to the potential respondents explaining the research and making it clear why I wanted to interview more than one adult in the household.

9.2.5 The Interview Process

Being in contact with the projects on a regular basis enabled feedback during the research process from both employees and volunteers. The feedback, along with the pilot interviews, helped to refine the topic guides. However, as previously mentioned, a few points on the guide were further adapted to enable a greater insight into the Toronto respondents' different cooking influences and styles. This did not emerge as an issue in

Edinburgh. Only when faced with respondents' different cultural influences in Toronto did the importance of these differences emerge.

Recruiting new users with young children was easier in Edinburgh than in Toronto, as households with children or retired people were the main users of the Edinburgh project. This may have reflected the fact that the co-op only opened during the morning one day a week, which meant anyone in employment was frequently unable to attend. While previous research and volunteer feedback in Toronto indicated that the main users were households with children, in actuality most of the new drop-off sites were situated in community projects or housing complexes aimed at single people. This could have been because the new drop-off sites had started in the summer, when fewer households with children were likely to start purchasing the GFB, due to school holidays and the fact that some drop-off sites were linked to schools and nurseries. This made the task of recruiting GFB respondents in August more difficult than expected.

The fact that half the respondents stopped using the initiative over the period provided an opportunity to examine their reasons for doing so, the stages that led to this, and whether there was a greater likelihood for particular types of people to stop using the facility. This provided an insight that could have been missed if solely interviewing regular CFI users, as it would have captured only those able and interested in using the projects.

9.2.6 The Analysis

The analysis process was frustrating at times, as it progressed slowly. Starting the initial analysis process during the fieldwork was beneficial as the data were fresh in my mind and any queries or findings could be used to inform the next stages of the fieldwork. Handling the data in the three stages assisted in breaking the data into manageable amounts. I now feel more aware of what to look for when carrying out analysis on this scale and could speedup the process while still carrying out the same standard and level of analysis. This is due to an increased awareness of what to look for within the text,

such as patterns within and between codes and how to proceed from descriptive to more in-depth analysis. Despite attending and completing relevant courses on qualitative analysis techniques, it was a challenge to see how to bring the codes together in a way that moved beyond description. Revisiting the main texts during the analysis brought the process, outlined in the text, to life and enhanced my understanding of how to proceed. The lifeline was being able to 'pull the codes to pieces more' and see them as containing properties and dimensions, as recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1998). These codes could then be contrasted with other codes more than I had previously done.

The findings of the analysis were discussed whenever possible with the project employees and my supervisors. It would have been useful to have also fed the findings back to the respondents to gauge their opinion. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.143) recognise this process as a way of assisting in validating the findings as the respondents should be able to identify themselves in the overall context of the main points being made, even if they do not fit every instance. However, this approach was not possible, as much time had passed between the interviews and analysis. It would have been difficult to re-contact people in both countries and they may not have wished to continue to be involved in the research. Another option would have been to send the transcripts to the respondents to make any changes if they felt it did not reflect what they were trying to say, although again this would require more of the respondents' time, which was already limited.

9.2.7 Anonymity

Every consideration was made throughout the research to retain anonymity, especially when writing up the analysis and findings. Using pseudonyms helped to check that there was a fair representation of quotes from different respondents: it assisted in remembering each respondent's interview to help ensure that I was not using a quotation out of context. It also meant that while being immersed in the transcript data I did not relate them to the interviewees' real names, as I began to only associate the interviews with the respondents' pseudonyms. There was no problem with obtaining consent to tape

the interviews, although in future, better practice would be to ask the respondents to sign a consent sheet rather than use a verbal agreement. This way both the respondents and I would have a greater level of understanding and trust about the agreement.

9.2.8 On Reflection

When the research began in 1998, the study was approached from a Scottish perspective at a Scottish university. At the time, I became familiar with the concept of 'food poverty' and the fact that CFIs were largely funded and nationally associated with health policy. Reflecting this was the fact that my supervisors had an interest in social policy and health topics within their fields of research. In Toronto, the background of CFIs related more to the concept of 'food security'. If I had started the study at a university in Toronto, the link with food security would have been more prominent. The supervisors could have been more likely to be from backgrounds in social policy and poverty and the equivalent of a social inclusion unit rather than in social policy and social science and health and research, as in Edinburgh. I believe the focus of the study would have been marginally different had it been initiated in Toronto, reflecting the countries' different perspectives. However, the findings would have been similar if the research had set out to explore the aspects considered in this study.

For a person operating alone, within a restricted timeframe and limited resources, the research process worked well. The fieldwork stayed within the available resources and time scale. The analysis and write up process took the greatest amount of time, due to some of the challenges previously highlighted. The whole research process took a lot of time, patience and organisation. It was a positive experience providing, an adequate amount of data and insights into CFIs that have not previously been highlighted in the literature and, in some instances, reaffirming literature on the food provisioning cycle.

9.3 The Respondents and the Use of the Projects

9.3.1 The Respondents

Through continued use of the projects, all the households increased the quantity and variety of produce purchased and consumed. However, the amount and variety consumed varied depending upon many factors related to the use of the projects and different stages in the food provisioning cycle: purchasing, preparation and cooking and consumption. Perceptions, attitudes and interests in supporting the project and local community, wider concerns about food, farming and the environment also influenced the continued use of and therefore the benefits derived from using the projects.

Motivations to Use the CFIs

For the majority of respondents, the primary reasons for using their local food project were affordability, convenience and health interests related to consuming more produce. The majority of the respondents had low incomes and all of them had experienced times when they were short of money and conscious of the need to keep their food budget low. The health interests consisted of short and long-term interests. For instance, one respondent was interested in eating more produce during her pregnancy, while others always wanted to use more produce to benefit the household' in the long-term.

9.3.2 Purchasing

The respondents' shopping patterns reinforced many of the points highlighted by the literature in relation to shopping barriers associated with accessibility and affordability. The respondents tried to balance their limited budget, time constraints and the type of transport available, while purchasing food that was consistent with their households' demands and needs.

Accessibility

For the majority of respondents (initially all the co-op and five GFB respondents), food shopping was dominated by the aim of obtaining the most affordable selection of food.

A lot of time was required to travel to many shops or a more distant supermarket due to the lack of selection of affordable foods from nearby shops. The respondents in Anderson and Cox's (2000) study, of challenges to eating five pieces of produce a day, were also likely to shop around in order to find produce of a good quality at affordable prices. Obtaining the best deals from facilities within walking distance required, as Anderson and Cox (2000) also found, having the time available during the day to access many shops. This meant that those with daytime commitments experienced difficulty in purchasing the best deals, which was apparent for the three GFB respondents who were only able to shop in the evening at a convenience shop. They experienced time restrictions so that convenience was the most important consideration when shopping. Consequently, they paid a premium on a limited selection of food from local convenience shops.

The respondents experienced access problems similar to those outlined in the literature, in particular Sparks (2000). They had to travel outside their local area if they wanted to use large supermarkets with more affordable prices. This was a particular problem for respondents without access to transport. Out of the twenty-one respondents, only two in Toronto had access to an affordable selection of food from a close-by supermarket.

For the majority of the respondents, collecting the box or going to the co-op was less stressful than using other food outlets, as it was local and convenient to walk to and take produce home from. However, the designs of the projects influenced who could access them.

Receiving the GFB fitted into the respondents' shopping routines with ease, as they collected the box locally at a time suitable to them. This meant that people who worked or studied during the day were able to use the project. The majority of the GFB respondents had commitments that prevented them from collecting the box during the day. The only difficulty for a few of the GFB respondents arose in situations where respondents did not know their co-ordinator beforehand and the drop-off site was not run

by an organisation. They were then more likely to experience problems with arranging regular ordering patterns.

The Edinburgh respondents who normally used many different shops were able to incorporate the use of the co-op into their routines. This reduced their need to use other grocery shops at all or as often and was welcomed, since the quality and variety of produce was better at the co-op. Most of the co-op respondents were not in work and lived in the area where the co-op operated, which made it easy to use. However, the limited opening hours of the co-op could present access problems. It needed only one other activity, such as taking children to nursery and access to the co-op would become problematic.

Affordability

For the majority of the respondents, it was apparent that purchasing affordable food was a conscious activity that dominated their aims and made shopping stressful at times. This was demonstrated by some respondents' shopping behaviour: from choosing to shop at a time when the traffic flow was low in order to keep the cost of a taxi low, to counting up the cost of goods while going around the shops. The strategies used by the respondents included placing limits on their food budget, sometimes to the extent of assigning an amount per shop, to stay within their budget. These strategies echoed Hirshman et al.'s findings about respondents' shopping on a low income employing "complex coping mechanisms to minimise the impact of their poverty" (2002, p.24). They go on to say "rarely was shopping spontaneous or chaotic – rather it was deliberate, time-intensive and controlled (Hirshman et al 2002, p.24). As in this study, Hirshman et al. (2002) found that respondents were organised about where they were going to shop and how much they were going to spend in certain places or on certain goods. These approaches were needed to ensure value for money within the budget available.

The only respondents who had less structured approaches to shopping were the three GFB respondents who used their local convenience shop on a daily basis. They did not have the time or transport to access more affordable shops, which left them with an expensive convenience shop. It costs more to buy healthy food in most low income areas (Biddle 1995, p.7; Dowler & Craig 1997, p.129). Therefore, people have to shop elsewhere, pay the premium or buy alternatives. The three respondents felt that, due to access problems, they had no choice but to use the local convenience shop rather than affordable supermarkets that required available time and transport to use them. Elise used the convenience shop everyday rather than weekly, as a strategy to avoid being aware of how much money she actually spent on food every week.

Part of the stress of shopping was reduced for GFB respondents because of the affordability of the box, especially for those receiving a subsidy. The box enabled a few respondents to receive produce when ordinarily they would not have been able to, as in the case of Amanda, who always ran out of money at the end of the month. This was due to respondents paying in advance when they had money available and the delivery of the box at a time when benefit payments or student loans had run out.

For those using the co-op, the affordable prices reduced some of the stress associated with shopping. Respondents, such as Jane and Becky, found that a significant benefit of using the co-op was that due to the reliably low prices they could stay within budget, yet fulfil their household's produce needs. They did not worry about reaching the checkout and not having enough money, as they always did when using supermarkets. This was despite the fact that the price per item was usually given at the supermarket and not at the co-op, only in terms of price per kilo.

Shopping Pattern Changes

Some of the respondents changed their shopping patterns when using the CFIs. For instance, Cath chose to make use of less shops and rely on the GFB and one large shop a week at a distant supermarket as a way to curtail her spending on food. Tania and John

did the reverse of this and found that through using the projects they just began to rely on the box and the use of local shops more frequently rather than using a distant large supermarket once a fortnight. The convenience of receiving the box also helped Laura and Elise to make less use of their convenience shop. With the advent of the box, evening meals were based on the produce in the box and food already in the home, which meant there was less need to use the convenience shops. All the respondents who felt their shopping behaviour had changed because of using the projects believed that their situations had improved.

Food Purchasing Choices

Any strategies to purchase affordable food involved time, travel and motivation. Employing different strategies maximised food choices to give respondents more control over buying food within their health, cost and convenience motivations, thereby helping to reduce the stress associated with shopping. Whether using many or one main shop(s), most respondents were faced by limited food choices. Different strategies were adopted to obtain the best value for money in the shops. Strategies included opportunity purchasing by taking the time to obtain the best deals by buying special offers and reduced priced foods. Substitute purchasing was where canned, frozen or a cheaper alternative food was purchased instead of fresh food. Necessity shopping involved buying food based on convenience and current needs at the expense of benefiting from good deals. These strategies were important in allowing the respondents to balance health, cost and time motivations, sometimes at the expense of food preferences of household members.

The co-op's affordable prices meant the respondents purchased more produce, especially fruit, in greater quantities and variety than they did from elsewhere. The only problem was when availability at the co-op was limited due to particular items selling out quickly.

Through receiving the GFB, respondents had a guaranteed quantity and variety of produce coming into their home. The GFB respondents chose the type of box they wanted but not the exact contents. The respondents who had unconfident approaches to food activities and had difficulty utilising the contents of the box were the only ones to raise the lack of choice as an issue. The proactive and reactive respondents usually liked the surprise of the box's content and tried to use the produce. The lack of choice had the benefit of introducing new foods into the household and food that one or more members did not like and was therefore not usually purchased.

The Influence of Preparation and Cooking on Purchasing Choices

Henson et al. (1998) highlighted that home managers try to ensure as often as possible that the food choices reflect the household's needs and preferences. Often the household's interests and preferences are placed before those of the home manager (Charles and Kerr 1987). The respondents' food purchasing choices, while taking into consideration household preferences, also reflected the respondents' approach to food activities.

The respondents' approaches to food within the home, whether proactive, reactive or unconfident, reflected the food choices made within the shops accessed rather than being a determinant of the actual shops used. The unconfident respondents were more likely to buy foods not requiring much preparation and cooking, including snacks and ready-made foods. The reactive respondents were most likely to purchase a mixture of foods from basic ingredients to processed, quick to prepare children's meals, snacks and ready-made foods. This variety reflected their different time restrictions and motivations as well as the fact that household members' demands were normally for quick and processed meals. The reactive group consisted of respondents with different preferences: some preferring a mix of basic ingredients and ready-made meals, while others wanted to eat fewer processed foods. The proactive respondents were more likely to buy basic ingredients to make their own meals. They did purchase some ready-made foods to save

cost as well as time, although not to the same extent as other respondents, since they preferred to make their own meals.

Shepherd et al. (1996) found that after a decrease in income people reduced the variety and quantity of food consumed. The reverse of this happened as a result of using the projects, where the low costs allowed respondents' money to go further so that they purchased and consumed a greater variety and quantity of produce. This increase in variety can be beneficial, as it can increase the intake of essential vitamins and minerals required as part of a healthy diet (Searle 2002).

9.3.3 Preparation, Cooking and Consumption

The extent that households increased their consumption of produce when using the projects depended on respondents' motivation, confidence, skills and knowledge: whether they were proactive, reactive or unconfident. When the respondents stopped using the projects, they faced the same purchasing barriers as previously, with their consumption of produce returning to earlier levels.

The Respondents' Approaches to Food Activities

For the proactive respondents, food preparation was a priority in their lives and they maintained control over what meals they would prepare. They were already active in trying new meals and therefore it was not seen as a risk to try different items of produce and recipes. Fussy household members' tastes did not deter them from preparing certain foods. This group often had another adult to prepare a meal for or were trained cooks, which resulted in the children's preferences not usually dominating the food choices made. Prior to the projects, the main barrier to consuming more produce appeared to be cost.

While competent at preparing and cooking a variety of meals, the reactive respondents were often restricted in the foods they prepared because of time constraints, motivation and the household's preferences, in particular children's tastes. Some of the respondents

tried new meals and did not see this as a risk, whereas others were discouraged from trying new meals due to the children's tastes, particularly if no other adults were present at the meal. Some respondents wanted to consume more produce than they currently did and others found that they just did so due to using the projects. Often meals containing produce were seen as being in contrast to easy to prepare, convenient meals. Maddock et al. (1999) highlighted the issue that healthy food is not considered to fit with individuals' preferences for quick, effortless foods. Cooking with vegetables needs to be seen as convenient, possibly through individuals being aware of short-cut techniques and the role of planning (Kilcast et al. 1996). The reactive respondents would have perhaps benefited from ideas about how to prepare quick meals containing produce that the children would eat, as the children played an important role in the foods prepared. The barriers to consuming more produce were related to cost and a combination of other factors, such as priority, motivation, available time and who they were cooking for.

The confident proactive and reactive respondents believed that receiving the box/using the co-op helped them to consume more produce and to cook more and different meals from basic ingredients. Anderson and Morris (2000) point out that being able to increase home cooking increases individuals' control over healthy eating. The process of change to incorporate more variety and quantity of vegetables into the households' meals involved different approaches. The confident respondents were most likely to start by incorporating a larger quantity of vegetables into meals that they regularly prepared. Another way was to try unfamiliar items of produce in familiar meals. Respondents progressed to using the produce as an opportunity to prepare meals that they had not previously or recently prepared. The change to trying new meals and items of produce was incremental and done on a regular basis by the proactive respondents. The reactive respondents experimented and tried new meals on a more sporadic basis, reflecting their different levels of motivation, available time and prioritisation given to food activities.

The unconfident respondents had limited food skills and knowledge. They saw making any changes to the foods they consumed as a large risk, due to household members not being willing to try them. When using the projects the co-op respondents chose to purchase mainly fruit and salad, as they did not require cooking skills. The unconfident GFB respondents could not choose the contents of the box and therefore received items of unfamiliar vegetables that they often found difficult to use. The produce was incorporated into meals that did not require much preparation, such as snacks or familiar meals. The unconfident respondents were similar to those in McIlveen and Chesnutt's (1999) study, as they often consumed ready-made convenience foods regardless of how much time they had available. The exception was Pam who, despite being unconfident about food preparation and cooking, was highly motivated to improve her skills and be able to use all of the produce she received in the box. This was a huge challenge that she often struggled with. Without the skill, knowledge and motivation to use the produce, the benefits of the projects were reduced. Being able to purchase affordable produce was only one of the barriers preventing its consumption. The households' preferences and respondents skills and confidence were the most significant barriers.

The proactive respondents were similar to Kilcast et al.'s (1996) 'high consumers': they had a high level of control over deciding what foods would be prepared, along with the skills and motivation which allowed them to prepare meals containing a lot of produce. The unconfident respondents were similar to Kilcast et al.'s (1996) 'low consumers' of produce. Their decisions about the foods to be prepared were limited by their skills and their households' fussy tastes, with everyone often eating different meals. Respondents had little control over what the household consumed and did not often plan meals ahead of time. The reactive respondents' level of control seemed to be somewhere between the high and low consumers of produce. Reactive respondents' decisions about food preparation were often dominated by the children's tastes. The reactive and unconfident respondents often felt that there was not much point preparing a meal to their own taste that the children would not eat. Leather (1992) points out that the influence of children on adults' food choices can be substantial and is often underestimated. Without the

acceptance of vegetable-based meals by children it is unlikely households will continue to have them (Kilcast et al. 1996). The different levels of control over the foods prepared meant that some respondents, despite being responsible for preparing the meal, were not always preparing food in line with the preferences. This often prevented the consumption of produce, despite the respondents' aims to consume more produce for health and taste preferences.

The Influence of Produce in the Home

The most universal effect in Edinburgh, regardless of the approach to food activities, was that all the households consumed more fruit. The Edinburgh respondents had fruit bowls from which household members helped themselves. The fruit bowls worked best when they were visible and full of variety. The co-op sold the produce at significantly lower prices than elsewhere, which meant households increased the quantity and variety in their home. Previously, the amount of fruit purchased was limited. The perception of fruit as expensive compared to other foods regardless of a household's income was also highlighted by Cox et al. (1996, p.45). Dobson et al. (1994) found households on low incomes often restricted or did not buy fruit, as it was considered expensive and did not represent value for money. As the cost was reduced, some respondents actively encouraged their children to eat more of it; others just found they bought more and that the children began to consume more.

In Toronto, some household members were more inclined to help themselves at home to fruit from the box, although this was less apparent than among co-op respondents. This could reflect climatic differences: in Toronto less fruit is visible due to being stored in refrigerators because of warm temperatures. In addition, fruit was not considered by the respondents to be expensive in comparison to other foods, so that the change in quantity and variety might not have been so large. Lastly, the box provided a balance of fruit and vegetables so that the fruit coming into the home might have increased, though less significantly than was the case for co-op respondents, who could choose how much to

purchase. The GFB project sold a box solely containing fruit, but only one respondent regularly ordered it.

Some respondents also found that the presence of larger quantities of produce in the home made them more likely to think about using it. The effect was similar to that highlighted by Anderson and Cox's (2000) study, where a planned intervention found that an abundant supply and display of fruit in the home and workplace encouraged intake. They also found that low-income participants had difficulty coping with the cost of taking part in the intervention because other household members also started consuming the new types of produce introduced into the home. The reverse of this is that when produce is not easily visible and available, it is difficult to maintain a sufficient intake (Cox et al. 1996). This was true for the respondents who had stopped using the project; they found they gave their children more snacks and biscuits rather than purchasing fruit from elsewhere. It was unclear whether prolonged use of the project resulted in households maintaining, increasing or reducing the amount of produce consumed once it became a regular feature in their home.

As Lambart et al. (2002) point out, aiming to encourage people to consume five portions of produce a day is asking the average person to double their intake of produce for life. Considering this, it was not surprising that it was easier for those respondents who were already possessed the necessary skills and motivation to do so. The projects were of most benefit to those competent to prepare and consume a range of items of produce. The provision of affordable produce gave such individuals the opportunity to experiment with a greater variety and quantity of produce. Lambart et al. (2002) and Anderson and Morris (2000) point out that due to the different skills and time for preparation required, as well as the different tastes, it was easier for individuals to consume fruit than vegetables. All the respondents and their households were able to increase their intake of fruit but the range and quantity of vegetables consumed was closely related to the different approaches to food activities. Marshall et al. (1995, p.282) highlighted that vegetables are still not commonly perceived as a centrepiece in their own right. While

some of the proactive respondents did begin to prepare more vegetable-based meals, the other respondents did not do this due to household members' taste preferences; and some unconfident respondents were unsure how to make the change.

9.3.4 The Wider Interests

While the main initial reasons for using the projects were related to cost, convenience and health, some respondents held wider interests. Some Edinburgh respondents were concerned with their local community and the Toronto respondents were mainly interested in the environment, farming, the politics of food and community building. These interests influenced the respondents' commitment and likelihood of continuing to use the projects. The respondents who had community or wider concerns were more likely than other respondents to consider themselves as users or members of the projects. The unconfident respondents were most likely to stop using the projects and consider themselves to be customers. They were not interested in the projects apart from being able to purchase affordable produce.

The community or wider interests were increased or maintained in different ways. Through going to the co-op, respondents had more social contacts within their local neighbourhood. Respondents started to meet and talk to more local people and sometimes had coffee/tea with the volunteers. As they spoke to more people, they began to feel more involved in and aware of community issues and events. Although sometimes limited, the GFB offered community contact through the drop-off site. The GFB did provide an opportunity for the respondents to be involved in, and show their support for, an organisation that shared similar beliefs about sustainable farming and community building. The GFB's regular newsletter kept the respondents informed of the CFIs' developments and related food and community issues.

9.4 A Comparison of the Projects' Approaches

The projects' backgrounds and values closely reflected the countries' different approaches to community food issues. The GFB project formed its aims and principles around the concept of food security so that it included poverty, health, agriculture, environmental and community issues in its design. This approach reflected the Canadian focus and the wider initiative's aims of tackling food insecurity. ECFI remained focused on addressing health and poverty issues, which corresponded with the founding communities' interests, as well as the political context of CFIs in Scotland.

FTT followed a more top-down approach mixed with a social focus, where communities could choose how they wanted to participate in the GFB project within the structure set by the project. This design enabled the GFB to work towards tackling food security in their processes and daily work. ECFI had a bottom-up approach through being facilitated by, and having the backing of, the communities with which it worked. ECFI remained focused on addressing health and poverty issues within its daily processes.

9.4.1 The Warehouses

The GFB warehouse was run in a way that incorporated the project's food security aims. The employees could determine what produce to put into the boxes, as they knew the number of boxes ordered by the users in advance, with the users not choosing the exact contents. This allowed them to keep the food seasonal and affordable. It also enabled them to purchase the produce from local small-scale farmers, which assisted them in working towards supporting sustainable farming techniques and local food security.

The co-op project's warehouse reflected its bottom-up approach. The warehouse operated in a manner that allowed each co-op to place an order with ECFI. ECFI acted as a central purchasing system. This approach prevented ECFI from running the warehouse in a way that would allow it more control in purchasing items from the market that were in season or on special offer, which would provide more affordable produce to the users.

9.4.2 The Role of the Volunteers

For both projects the use of volunteers was central to the way they operated in order to fulfil their community development function and to distribute the produce. The responsibilities and role of the volunteers emphasised the projects' respective top-down and bottom-up approaches. The GFB volunteers had a set of responsibilities (placing orders, collecting money and so on) and within these, they could choose how to run their drop-off site and how many hours and when to volunteer. The volunteers therefore worked within the structure of the project. ECFI considered each co-op to be owned by the community and to operate for the community. Therefore, the co-op volunteers were seen as having the responsibility of owning and running their co-op through the support of ECFI. This could require a large commitment from the volunteers but allowed them a large say in the development of their co-op and how the ECFI employees worked with them.

9.4.3 Communication

A main difference in the design of the projects was the form of communication between users, volunteers and project employees. The GFB project communicated directly to the volunteers and users through providing each with a regular newsletter. This emphasised GFB being accountable to both the volunteers and users. The newsletter was skimmed by most respondents and provided details about the project, recipe ideas and topical food issues. It was a link for the respondents interested in farming, sustainability and food issues and developed other respondents' awareness of these issues. This was important, as the respondents with wider interests were more likely to continue with the project than the users who only wanted to save money.

ECFI employees were in contact with the co-op volunteers, who were in turn, in contact with the users. ECFI employees talked directly to the volunteers, who relayed the information to their users on an ad hoc basis. This reflected ECFI's focus on supporting the volunteers who 'owned' the co-ops. The respondents often received and shared information about what was going on in their local community but not about the wider

CFI of which the co-op was a part. This meant they were unsure about why and how the initiative operated, why the prices were so low and where the produce came from.

9.4.4 Similar Challenges

Although the designs reflected the different values and countries' approaches to food issues, the initiatives still experienced similar challenges when trying to develop sustainable CFIs. These challenges are similar to those highlighted by Lipski et al. (1998) and McGlone et al. (1999) through their studies of different types of CFIs. Challenges included sustaining funding, establishing and maintaining community involvement, building networks, partnerships and achieving credibility in the community.

Ensuring the continuation of and finding new sources of funding for different parts of the initiatives was a challenge. Both projects were affected by funding problems at the time of the fieldwork. This resulted in extra pressure and increased workloads for the employees to ensure that the GFB/co-op projects continued to operate.

Finding and maintaining ways to ensure community involvement was essential for the projects in allowing the employees to respond to the needs of those involved. This challenge was achieved in different ways reflecting the level of involvement of the volunteers and users. Both projects aimed to supply to be reliable and to deliver good quality produce at affordable prices, which assisted in building a degree of trust and credibility in the eyes of the volunteers and users.

Both projects were networking with other organisations and building partnerships within communities to improve the sustainability of the co-ops and drop-off sites. Local organisations encourage and attract users, assist with recruiting and supporting volunteers in their roles. They also help by providing funding or supporting groups to obtain funding.

9.4.5 Encouraging the Purchasing and Consumption of Produce

Another similarity was the way that an interest in purchasing and consuming more produce by the project users was encouraged through maintaining a discreet manner, rather than explicitly highlighting the health benefits and the need to eat five portions of produce a day. The co-ops encouraged consumption through ensuring the availability of large quantities and a wide range of produce, although sometimes maintaining availability was problematic. The attractive layout, as well as the inexpensive prices, often led to the purchase of a greater quantity and variety of produce than the respondents usual purchased. The GFB ensured that the box contained unfamiliar/expensive seasonal items along with regular items of produce. The GFB project also included a newsletter with a recipe for any unfamiliar items of produce that the confident respondents sometimes used.

9.5 Recommendations

9.5.1 Policy/Practice Recommendations

The projects led to all the respondents increasing their consumption of produce. This would suggest that the projects studied should be promoted and supported to continue and progress as a means for households with young children to access affordable produce. The projects also provided an opportunity for communities to run their own groups and participate in the city-wide initiatives.

The CFIs need ways to ensure sustainability through long-term funding mechanisms and the opportunity to be both flexible and innovative in their approach to keep the projects responsive to volunteers' and users' needs. The ability to be innovative also helps the initiatives to develop and run a variety of food projects to meet different needs.

Developing links with farmers/producers to supply CFIs is a possible area for further development in Scotland. The GFB has created an innovative approach to involving the farmers in their work. The link to local suppliers could encourage new users and the

continuation of users with an interest in sustainability and local issues, as well as developing the project to tackling food insecurity. Users may feel more inclined to use a project if they know that it benefits local farmers as well as the local community.

The encouragement of partnerships and local organisations working with CFIs may be of benefit to all. Local organisations can help the sustainability and strengthen the development of co-ops and drop-off sites. They can help with recruiting volunteers and users to ensure that the food projects continue, are sustainable and are able to reflect the local communities' needs. CFIs assist local organisations through their expertise in tackling food insecurity/poverty issues at a community level and in the practical role of providing affordable produce.

The projects demonstrate that through the availability of affordable produce and accompanying recipes, health promotion can encourage the intake of not only larger quantities of produce but also a greater variety of produce. This includes unfamiliar items of produce, as long as the user is motivated and already competent in undertaking food activities.

Suitability of Projects

The differences between the designs of the GFB and co-op project have emphasised that the development of any new CFIs with similar aims should take into consideration the communities' specific needs, rather than the typical approaches in Scotland, (co-ops) and Ontario (GFBs). Where the community has a lot of people who have work or study commitments and busy routines, the flexible hours of the GFB are more appealing to potential users and volunteers. The volunteers can operate their drop-off site at hours that suit their schedule. The users can collect their box at a convenient time. The co-ops' limited opening hours restrict potential users and volunteers who have commitments during the day. However, the co-op is good for areas where people are available during the day because they are unemployed, retired or parents looking after children. Co-ops can build up social networks in areas with problems of social isolation, which is possibly

why they are often linked with regeneration and social inclusion initiatives. The focus on the community volunteers running and owning the co-op allows them more control over the project's development than in Toronto. However, it means volunteering can be a greater commitment than in Toronto and a group of committed volunteers has to be available. Being a user also requires being able to use the co-op at the same two hours every week.

Another consideration when choosing the type of project was the funding available for the volunteer portion of the project. Both CFIs had funding for the projects to cover the operation of their warehouse and the outreach work, but did not encompass each drop-off site or co-op. Drop-off sites in Toronto did not require funding, although if an organisation running the site did have some money, they sometimes subsidised the cost of the box for its users. Each co-op in Edinburgh was required to obtain a small grant to operate. Volunteers had to apply for their own funding, although they received supported in doing this from the ECFI employees.

The availability and role of paid employees was also an important consideration. ECFI employees spent a lot of time going around the co-ops and working with a small number of volunteers. This allowed them to respond to each co-op's individual needs, although it was time consuming. The use of a newsletter in Toronto meant employees could reach a large number of volunteers without being required to spend much time with the volunteers.

Motivation, Confidence and Skills

The two projects helped households with young children to begin to consume more produce. The extent to which these changes occur depends greatly on the motivation of the home managers and their confidence, skill and knowledge when approaching food activities within the home.

The projects were of most benefit to the respondents who were competent and confident at utilising the produce and to those interested in the projects for reasons other than purchasing affordable produce. The most skilled and motivated were able to consume more and different items of produce. They enjoyed using the projects and the challenge of creating new dishes and trying new foods when they had the time available.

The sharing of ideas and helpful hints about how to use the unfamiliar larger quantities and greater variety of produce might have helped some GFB respondents to avoid wastage from the box and to encourage co-op respondents to try more produce. The co-op could provide a recipe card or information on different ways to cook an unfamiliar item of produce. The inclusion of a recipe in the newsletter in Toronto on how to use unusual items of produce was beneficial to people who were confident at cooking and motivated to try it.

The effect of a visible fruit bowl and full of variety was universal among all co-op households. More fruit in the GFB or promotion and development of the fruit box could result in an increase in the fruit consumed, as this is something that everyone was able to do. Providing more ideas to users about simple ways to prepare fruit could further increase consumption and build the confidence of the unconfident users to do more with items of produce, as they are already familiar with preparing and consuming items of fruit. Providing more opportunities at the co-ops to try the produce on sale, in particular unfamiliar items or fruit, that do not require cooking, such as avocados and mangoes, could encourage respondents to try them at home.

Alternative interventions targeted at those for whom the projects had limited benefit would seem appropriate, to assist them in developing their skills and knowledge of food, along with strategies and ways to deal with household members' preferences and time constraints. Techniques were needed to help them to prepare quickly more convenient home-made meals that were healthy and that the household, especially children, would

want to consume. This way they could benefit more from the availability of the affordable produce from the projects.

Building on Users' Interests

The co-op, in particular, resulted in the respondents meeting and talking to more people in the local area, with some people being more aware of and interested in local community issues and events. Through its newsletter, the GFB built an awareness and understanding of food, farming and community interests. Both these approaches kept people interested in continuing to use the projects and gave respondents an opportunity to show their support for something they believed in. Developing the respondents' interest in community or wider food issues would be an area in need of further investigation to see if this can be used to attract and maintain users of the projects.

The use of a newsletter in Edinburgh, such as that produced by the GFB, could help attract users and extend existing users' interests and understanding beyond their local community to the wider actions and aims of ECFI. It could link ECFI, the volunteers and users leading to consistent targeted information about the structure and process of ECFI and its work. In the long term, this could increase users' understanding and support for the project and the wider initiative, as it did in Toronto.

Dowler (2003) argues that CFIs do not always reach their political potential. The GFB was part of FTT and FoodShare which were active at political and advocacy levels, as part of their role of working towards food security. ECFI was not as active, although it had done some advocacy work in relation to another project. One way that the awareness of advocacy issues could progress would be through linking all of the co-ops in the project and ECFI through newsletters in a way that did not reduce each co-op's sense of ownership.

The practical factors that prevented the respondents from using the projects for longer than six months need investigated further, for example different opening hours of the

co-ops.

9.5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

From the findings, it would appear that those who continue with their local project are more likely to be motivated, confident and skilled in utilising produce. They may also be involved in the local area and/or hold wider interests in food. It is not clear whether regular users of the projects for longer than six-months, closely fit this description. Research into different types of household users who have been using the projects for different lengths of time would allow an insight into their levels of motivation, confidence and skill to utilise the produce. It could also provide details about how any benefits from using the projects are maintained and whether respondents' households continue to increase their consumption of produce and in what ways.

The research undertaken was unable to examine the long-term effects resulting from using the projects: whether consumption of produce levelled off or continued to increase and in what ways this happened. What was clear was that access to affordable produce was paramount. When the respondents did stop using their local project, their consumption of produce went back to previous levels, as again produce became expensive and often locally unavailable.

The respondents in Toronto were from different ethnic backgrounds. While they talked about how this influenced the foods they prepared, it was unclear as to whether the CFIs were more suitable for some people from certain ethnic backgrounds than others and why this would be the case. For instance, the projects may not offer enough produce that would be considered appropriate, for certain diets.

The study suggests that some of the social aspects of participation in the projects could have potential in building social capital. Further work needs to be done to investigate how CFIs can help build social capital through their different approaches and whether some approaches are better than others. For instance, the co-op's design resulted in more

local people coming together and talking to each other on a weekly basis than collecting the GFB did.

9.6 Summary

The process by which users increase their consumption of produce through using the projects is complex and related to many factors beyond the availability of affordable produce. The deciding factor in the food prepared by the respondents and consumed by the household can be related to barriers that need to be addressed, such as household preferences and time constraints as well as the motivation, confidence, skills and knowledge in preparing certain foods. These raise issues about how the CFIs can encourage and enable the consumption of produce, through the food provisioning process; purchasing, preparation, cooking and consumption. Building on community and wider food concerns is one way to encourage people to continue with the projects.

CFIs have an important role to play in increasing low-income communities' access to affordable produce. The initiatives did result in their users increasing their access to affordable and convenient ways of purchasing produce. The FTT initiative in Toronto also provides an example of a project that is successful in engaging many local farmers as well as low-income communities in its approach towards achieving community food security. However, CFIs' ability to attract a wide range of households is limited by the projects' designs, available funding and the selection of food they make available, in this case produce. Many people are not able to participate regularly in these projects because of personal time constraints and commitments, and practical factors, such as the location of the projects and their operating times. It is not the role of these projects nor is it possible in their current capacity to reach everyone who needs better access to affordable healthy food.

Government action towards increasing food access is needed to reach a wide range of households who experience limited access to affordable healthy food. This includes low-income people who are working and cannot participate in community activities due to where they live, and the cultural appropriateness of the projects that operate. People need more opportunities to purchase food in line with their food preferences and to have more choice about the shops they can use and the choices available within them. To address factors that influence food access requires not only CFIs but also action on a wider scale involving government at a local and national level and those involved in farming, food production, town planning and the communities themselves. Through working together strategies can be developed that have food access as a central issue of food production and distribution. If access to food is considered as a right, then this provides a framework for a food strategy. It also means arrangements for implementing and monitoring the achievement of this right would be required.

CFIs also have a role in generating community interest in participating in discussions with local government, food producers and retailers. The initiatives studied already attracted some users who had an interest in wider food issues. There is potential to develop this interest and to look at the role of CFIs in addressing these issues. The challenge lies in creating a dialogue between the supply and demand sides and involving CFIs as part of the action taken. While CFIs do help increase people's access to affordable produce it must be remembered that the initiatives can only be part of a wider set of policies and initiatives that improve accessibility to affordable food and to achieve food security.

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Appendix A Letter for the respondents

The letters were printed on headed paper containing the relevant contact details

Letter 1 to the potential co-op participants:

PhD Research on Community Food Projects

My name is Nina Dutton, I am a PhD student carrying out research with Edinburgh Community Food Initiatives. I am looking at how community food projects make a difference to what families eat and the reasons behind this. I am conducting research into the work of food co-ops in Edinburgh and a Box scheme in Toronto, Canada.

I would be grateful if you could help me. I am looking for families to interview about whether using a community food co-op changes their shopping and eating habits. I am trying to interview single or two parent families, who have children at school and who have been using the project for four weeks to three months. If you would be interested in taking part in my research or know anyone who would be suitable please could you contact me. The interviews will be informal and confidential. If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

I would be most grateful for your help

Thank you,

Nina Dutton

Letter 2 to the GFB potential respondents and the project volunteers.

PhD Research on Community Food Projects

My name is Nina Dutton, I am a Scottish PhD student visiting Toronto. I am carrying out research with Field To Table to look at what ways community food projects make a difference to what families eat and the reasons behind this. I am conducting research into the work of the Box scheme in Toronto and food co-ops in Edinburgh, Scotland.

I would be grateful if you could help me in any way to recruit customers who would be willing to be interviewed. At present I am looking for families to interview, who have children at school and have been using the box scheme for between 2 to 4 months. I would like to interview them to find out what ways using the box scheme changes their shopping and eating habits.

If you know of any customers who would be interested, or have any suggestions about the best way to identify possible families please could you let me know. If you wish to contact me I will be at Field To Table 363 XXXX

I would be most grateful for any help.

Thank you

Nina Dutton

Appendix B

Topic Guides for the interviews

These are the co-op topic guides used in Edinburgh, the contents inside the brackets show where the GFB Toronto topic guides were different.

Topic Guide 1 Co-op (GFB) Respondents 1st interview

****Must test dictaphone**

I am carrying out research about community food projects. I am particularly interested in what families think of their local community food project. It is also useful to know what kind of foods families like to eat, or try to eat, and what factors affect their food choices.

In this interview I'll be asking about what kind of foods you and your family eat, how food is prepared and cooked and how this relates to your use of your local food co-op. **This is not a judgement about what your family eats, it is about the usefulness of the food project.**

Everything you say is confidential and the tape will only be heard by my supervisors and myself. It is important that you feel able to say whatever you want – there are no right or wrong responses. At any time if you want to stop or feel uncomfortable about something just let me know.

A. General family details

Who live with,
age children,
employment,
car,
how long lived here,
any special dietary requirements.

B. Purchasing food

- **responsibility** , role of the family,
- **use of co-op (GFB)**

initially, now,
volunteers/events, (co-ordinators / newsletter / events)
first impressions (do you already know people at your
stop?)

- purchasing from co-op (GFB)

what bought last time, (which box, contents)
usually buy (boxes tried / usually buy)
how does this change on weekly basis, WHY CHANGES,
choice, importance of, list, shop differently?
top-ups, frozen, tinned, always find what want?

- access/availability

ease of use,
routine,
use of other shops,
frequency,
car,
experience of other shops - enjoy shopping?
service, (is GFB form of shopping?)
buying food - planned/impulse -
demands by family, role of the children,
same influences/priorities in mind

- cost

spent last time, usually
effect on food choice,
method of payment,
ever need to cutback,
income to need,
% disposable income,
help from anybody else

in summary **what are the main influences when purchasing food ?**

C. Preparation/cooking

- snacks/ meals

- what prepare yesterday for main meal?

what preparation, do children join in?

cooking methods: contents/ingredients involved?

wastage,

fruit & vegetables used, prepared

how do these relate to what normally P/C? now & before co-op (GFB)

- effect of family activities, demands and preferences

- facilities and equipment utensils

storage,

recipes,

wastage

- confidence and knowledge/ skills [relate to co-op (GFB)]

what do when unsure,

sources of information

D. Eating patterns [relate to responses from above section or vice versa]

- what family ate yesterday, is this different from before the co-op (GFB)?

- changes and reactions to this by different family members

- Servings and seasonal factors

- children changes,

what like them to eat,

problems and strategies

- how do you balance families different taste demands and preferences?

- do you eat together?

where and when,

is it important

Are you aware of any changes in purchasing/ preparing/ eating which you think is related to the use of the co-op (GFB)? if yes, in what ways?

- would you say your food purchasing habits have changed?

- are you thinking about different food choices?

- when you are in other shops, you shop the same or differently than before the co-op (GFB)?

what think going to be like in next few months?

Co-op (GFB): in your opinion aims co-op (GFB) are,

good points,

recommendations

Is there anything else that I haven't asked you about that you'd like to talk about, or anything we talked about earlier that you'd like to say more about?

Topic Guide 2 Co-op (GFB) Respondents' second Interview

**** Test dictaphone**

In this interview I'll be covering similar issues to those covered in the first interview. This will allow me to gain a wider understanding of the role that your local food co-op plays in your family's purchases and consumption of produce. **This is not a judgement about what your family eats, it is about the usefulness of the food co-op (GFB).**

Everything you say is confidential and the tape will only be heard by my supervisors and myself. It is important that you feel able to say whatever you want – there are no right or wrong responses.

A. Check over general family details

Who live with, employment, car, any dietary requirements.

B. Purchasing food

- responsibility still the same,
- how the use of co-op (GFB) has changed
 - current interest,
 - impressions of it over the period (quality, stock, variety (what produce unavailable), availability, quantity, freshness, wastage, price fluctuations)
- **purchasing from Co-op (GFB)**
 - how & why what purchase has changed
 - examples of new items purchased (received in the box) and why they have been tried and whether they continue to buy them how much produce purchase elsewhere and why? Including frozen and tinned
- **access**
 - ease of use - hours
 - frequency of use and why,
 - time that usually go there
 - opening hours ever affected usage (delivery times)

Check over : shops been using and foods been buying over the period from other shops.

- **cost** the amount spent
 whether importance of cost changed
 effect on food choice,
 method of saving to go there (order box),
 changes in money available for food- what has this
 meant?
 % disposable income same?

Shops: co-op (GFB) / local/ main - experiences, differences between them, changes and the importance of these factors, (Foodbanks)

Time: spent at each shop, travel there and back, how much is time an issue (compared with money and other factors)

Convenience: distance, does it meet needs [what are they], barriers to using places, accessible, hours, queues,

Choosing food: choice/variety, availability, quality on offer (VFM), sell healthy food, wastage, special offers, use of shopping list, frequency go there, children, demands by family, enjoyment.

Social contact: service receive, atmosphere, stress involved, meeting people - in what ways, supports the local community, who are these shops for

- when you are in other shops, you shop the same or differently than before you used the co-op (GFB)? influences/priorities in mind

C. Preparation/cooking

what preparing tonight or prepared on a weekend day, how typical
examples of anything different/changes - context and barriers - why
recipes - how relates to what buy at the co-op (GFB)

(GFB: Describe style of cooking? [spices, herbs, condiments used,
methods] any specific cultural influences?)

how decide what to prepare?

effect of family activities, demands and preferences, time

what cooking entails and interest in food preparation

ingredients, what a meal should [if anything] consist of

when fruit & vegetables used

any resources/knowledge gained from co-op (GFB)? how? [staff, social
contact...]

noticed any changes in themselves [regarding food prep] and why?

health an issue? in what ways and why?

priority of food preparation and eating in daily life?

D. Eating patterns [relate to responses from above section or vice versa]

how & why is the co-op (GFB) making a difference to the families eating
habits, when is fruit and vegetables being eaten and by whom?

changes and reactions by different family members

- aims, strategies, barriers

- any changes in how often fruit and vegetables presented?

- have they noticed any changes

seasonal factors

how & why does what you eat relate to what you like to eat

what entail to change barriers to what different family members eat?

explore: using the co-op (GFB) - what you purchase fits around family tastes or
has led to changes. In what ways?

- are you thinking about different food choices?

E. Co-op (GFB)

why would you say you used the food co-op (GFB)?
see self as a member of the co-op (GFB), customer, user or what? why?
Who is the co-op (GFB) for?
who should the co-op (GFB) be for?
how would you describe the co-op (GFB) to a friend?
how does the co-op (GFB) operate, it's history,
where are the fruit and vegetables from,
why do you think other people do not use the co-op (GFB)?

Knowing I would be in contact made any difference?

Is there anything else that I haven't asked you about that you'd like to talk about, or anything we talked about earlier that you'd like to say more about?

Appendix C

Sample of the codes used in phase one of the analysis process

Codes for Round 1 Edinburgh interviews March 2000

Motivations (M) regarding purchasing food from the co-op and other shops:

Split into

- | | |
|---------|---|
| M – C - | Co-op |
| M – S - | Supermarket |
| M – O - | Other shops |
| M - | not directly related to a specific shop / co-op |

M-? = one of the following C / S / O / -

M-?-Choice the issues and motivations around choice in regards to variety, availability and quantity

M-?-Convenience convenience (location, time, travel, carrying goods...) in going to and continuing to use co-op and shops

M-?-Family Family demands and influences in what is bought, and the experience of having their family with them at the co-op and other food shops

M-?-Friend as a motivating factor to initially going there and continuing to go

M-?-Health importance of health factors

M-?-Manner the different approaches they take and why to shopping in general and at the co-op

M-?-Quality influence and importance of freshness, wastage of the stock / produce on offer

M-?-Service atmosphere and service that they receive at the co-ops and shops,

views of the volunteers / staff

M-?-Wider concerns and motivations about using co-ops because of broader issues, such as supporting community initiatives, environmental concerns – organic foods and wider issues

Factors (F) influencing what foods are purchased, prepared and consumed:

F-Health reference to health aims when talking about preparing and consuming meals, fitted in with what was identified for purchasing and health above

F-Parents parents' aims towards what their children eat, when, where and whether they achieve this. For instance, how their tactics with the children work in trying to get them to eat certain foods.

F-Tastes references showing the different tastes within the family and what this means to the respondent and food consumption.

F-Children references to children's tastes, preferences and how activities influence what is prepared and eaten, including their involvement in food preparation.

F-Costs specific cost issues behind the thinking of what they prepare and when they prepare certain meals as opposed to the cost element when shopping.

F-Facilities reference to how kitchen facilities influence what they can make or what they want to make

F-Partner reference to how partner influences what is prepared and eaten through tastes and preferences, time schedule, and the amount of help provided

F-respondent references to what respondent aims to prepare, what can prepare
in terms of skill and knowledge

F-Season how the time of year changes what the family eats

F-Time references to how available time influences what will be prepared and eaten.

Examples of change (CH) from using the co-op and barriers they have mentioned:

CH-Future what they think the changes will be using the co-op in the next couple of months regarding purchasing, preparing and consuming food within the family.

CHANGE examples of change that has happened since using the co-op, or changes they have thought about and the barriers that have arisen.

CH-PR-F+V where they previously bought produce

Appendix D The Other Food Projects Run by the CFIs

FoodShare's Projects

The education and research centre

Food Link Hotline

This project is in partnership with Community Information Toronto. It has expanded from a hunger hotline, volunteer run food bank referral service, to a referral system to every kind of food program in Toronto.

Community Kitchens

This project is in partnership with the city of Toronto Department of Public Health. It involves groups of people meeting to cook together. It serves a social function as well as providing cooking opportunities. FoodShare holds training sessions, community kitchen networking opportunities and provides information resources.

Anti-Hunger Advocacy and Policy Issues

FoodShare has a key role in a number of organisations and coalitions related to addressing policy dimensions of the food system. This also includes extensive work around student nutrition programmes. It includes a food security resource.

Just Grow It!

FoodShare helps with and promotes community gardens, they involve neighbours planning and growing gardens together. They offer advice and support, gardening workshops and information resources.

Field To Table

Focus on Food Training Programme

Currently a homeless youth employment training programme. In the past, the target group has been vulnerable women. The trainees experience working on the GFB project, developing kitchen and catering skills, assisting with community gardens and developing other food related and personal/life skills.

Catering Company

The kitchen provides employment for some graduates of the Focus on Food programme. The project adopts a business approach while following the initiatives principals of preparing healthy, seasonal foods at affordable prices for private and community organisations

Toronto Kitchen Incubator

Entrepreneurs and community groups can rent the fully licensed kitchen by the hour with support provided to develop their businesses.

Student Nutrition Project

This involves supplying fruit to schools within Toronto and working on the promotion of fruit within schools. Assistance in setting up the programme in schools is provided.

Since the research took place some of the projects have included designing and providing a box especially for women who have or are recovering from breast cancer. Also, work has been done in conjunction with schools to develop and promote healthy salad bars in schools and re-establishing fruit and vegetable gardens within Toronto at local hospitals for people with mental health difficulties. For recent information see www.foodshare.net

ECFI's Projects

Milk Token Initiative

The government gave milk tokens to mothers on income support with children under the age of 5 years old. These tokens could be exchanged for fresh milk. ECFI acted as a milk co-operative so that the profit from the tokens that the retailer received, could be returned to the mothers as a health dividend. This health dividend was a bag of fruit and vegetables worth £1 wholesale, which was worth up to double this at ECFI food prices compared with local prices.

Community Cafes

The Health Education Board funded ECFI in producing the 'Just For Starters' guide about how to start and maintain a community café. Community cafés provide opportunities to eat healthy and affordable food in a local social setting. It offers volunteers a chance to develop new skills and build confidence. ECFI assist groups in developing cafes.

Snack Attack Pack

In partnership with the City of Edinburgh's Educational Department, they are working on a strategy to boost fruit consumption though out Edinburgh's primary schools. The pack is about how to start and maintain a fruit shop through the participation of the children, teachers and volunteer parents. The aim is to encourage children to develop a habit of eating fruit from an early age.

ECFI's work includes community visits to nurseries and other groups to promote the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables.

ECFI has also been involved with other student nutrition campaigns, such as promoting the importance of school lunches and food mapping exercises with residents in low income areas in Edinburgh.